



"Afraid to ascend the tree, he decided on cutting it down,
and, having his axe with him, he set actively to work."

S T O R I E S
ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE
INSTINCTS OF ANIMALS,

Their Characters and Habits.

BY

THOMAS BINGLEY,

AUTHOR OF "STORIES ABOUT DOGS,"—"TALES OF SHIPWRECKS,"
"STORIES ABOUT HORSES," &c. &c.

WITH ENGRAVINGS FROM DRAWINGS BY THOMAS LANDSEER.

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P R E F A C E

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE favourable reception of this little work, and its rapid and extensive sale, has induced me to make such alterations and improvements in the present edition as, I hope, considerably to augment its interest.

I have only farther, once more, to direct attention to the admirable manner in which Mr. Landseer has delineated many of the most interesting scenes in the work.

T. B.



C O N T E N T S.

CHAPTER I.

UNCLE THOMAS RESUMES HIS STORIES ABOUT THE INSTINCTS OF ANIMALS.—TELLS ABOUT THE HORSE, AND OF THE IMMENSE HERDS WHICH ARE TO BE FOUND ON THE PLAINS OF SOUTH AMERICA; OF THEIR CAPTURE BY MEANS OF THE LASSO; AS WELL AS SEVERAL CURIOUS STORIES ABOUT THE INTELLIGENCE, AFFECTION, AND DOCILITY OF THE HORSE.....	Page 1.
---	---------

CHAPTER II.

UNCLE THOMAS TELLS ABOUT THE HABITS OF THE BEAVER; ALSO ABOUT THE CURIOUS NESTS OF THE SOCIALE GROSBEAK; AND GIVES A LONG AND ENTERTAINING ACCOUNT OF THE WHITE ANT OF AFRICA, AND THE IMPORTANT PART WHICH IT ACTS IN THE ECONOMY OF NATURE.....	21
---	----

CHAPTER III.

UNCLE THOMAS DESCRIBES THE MANNER IN WHICH WILD ELEPHANTS ARE CAUGHT, AND RELATES SOME CURIOUS STORIES OF THE CUNNING, AFFECTION, AND INTELLIGENCE OF THE ELEPHANT.	46
--	----

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER IV.

UNCLE THOMAS INTRODUCES TO THE NOTICE OF HIS LITTLE AUDIENCE THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD'S STORIES ABOUT SHEEP; AND TELLS THEM SOME INTERESTING STORIES ABOUT THE GOAT, AND ITS PE- CULIARITIES.....	Page 64
--	---------

CHAPTER V.

UNCLE THOMAS RELATES SOME VERY REMARKABLE STORIES ABOUT THE CAT; POINTS OUT TO THE BOYS THE CONNECTION SUBSISTING BE- TWEEN THE DOMESTIC CAT AND THE LION AND TIGER, AND TELLS THEM SOME STORIES ABOUT THE GENTLENESS, AS WELL AS THE FEROCITY OF THOSE ANIMALS.....	82
--	----

CHAPTER VI.

UNCLE THOMAS TELLS ABOUT THE TIGER, AND OF THE CURIOUS MODES WHICH ARE ADOPTED FOR ITS CAPTURE AND DESTRUCTION; ALSO ABOUT THE PUMA OR AMERICAN LION, AND INTRODUCES SOME HUNTING SCENES IN NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA, WITH OTHER IN- TERESTING AND ENTERTAINING ADVENTURES.....	116
--	-----

CHAPTER VII.

UNCLE THOMAS TELLS ABOUT THE MIGRATING INSTINCT OF ANIMALS:— OF THE HOUSE SWALLOW OF ENGLAND; AND THE ESCULENT SWALLOW, WHOSE NEST IS EATEN BY THE CHINESE. ALSO ABOUT THE PASSENGER PIGEON OF AMERICA; OF THE LAND-CRAB AND ITS MIGRATIONS; AND OF THOSE OF THE SALMON AND THE HERRING.	138
--	-----

CHAPTER VIII.

- UNCLE THOMAS TELLS ABOUT THE BABOONS, AND THEIR PLUNDERING EXCURSIONS TO THE GARDENS AT THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE, ALSO ABOUT LE VAILLANT'S BABOON KEEPS, AND HIS PECULIARITIES; AND RELATES AN AMUSING STORY ABOUT A YOUNG MONKEY, DEPRIVED OF ITS MOTHER, PUTTING ITSELF UNDER THE FOSTERING CARE OF A WIG-BLOCK!..... Page 169

CHAPTER IX.

- UNCLE THOMAS CONCLUDES STORIES ABOUT INSTINCT WITH SEVERAL INTERESTING ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE AFFECTIONS OF ANIMALS, PARTICULARLY OF THE INSTINCT OF MATERNAL AFFECTION; AND POINTS OUT THE BENEFICENT CARE OF PROVIDENCE IN IMPLANTING IN THE BREASTS OF EACH OF HIS CREATURES THE INSTINCTS WHICH ARE NECESSARY FOR ITS PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION.... 189

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CHAPTER I.

UNCLE THOMAS RESUMES HIS STORIES ABOUT THE INSTINCTS OF ANIMALS.—TELLS ABOUT THE HORSE, AND OF THE IMMENSE HERDS WHICH ARE TO BE FOUND ON THE PLAINS OF SOUTH AMERICA; OF THEIR CAPTURE BY MEANS OF THE LASSO; AS WELL AS SEVERAL CURIOUS STORIES ABOUT THE INTELLIGENCE, AFFECTION, AND DOCILITY OF THE HORSE.

“ COME along, Boys, I am glad to see you again! I promised at our next meeting, to tell you some Tales about the Instincts of Animals; and I propose to begin with the Horse. I like to interest you with those animals with which you are familiar, and to draw out your sympathies towards them. After the STORIES

ABOUT Dogs which I told you, some of them exhibiting those fine creatures in such an amiable and affectionate light, I am sure they must assume a new interest in your minds. Such instances of fidelity and attachment could not fail to impress you with a higher opinion of the animal than you before possessed, and show that kindness and good treatment, even to a brute, are never without their reward.

“ I wish to excite the same interest towards the other animals which, I hope, I have effected towards the Dog. Each, you will find, has been endowed by its Creator with particular Instincts and dispositions, to fit it for the station which it was intended to occupy in the great system of Nature. But I know you like stories better than lectures, so I will not tire you by lecturing, but at once proceed to relate some of the stories which I have gathered for you.”

“ Oh no, Uncle Thomas, we never feel tired of listening to you ; we know you have always something curious to tell us.”

" Well then, Boys, I will begin with the Horse. I have so many stories about the intelligence, sagacity, and docility of that noble animal however; that I must now tell you a few only, referring you for the others to STORIES ABOUT HORSES, where you will find many more, quite equal in interest to any of the Stories which I have told you."

" Thank you, Uncle Thomas!"

" In some parts of the world there are to be found large herds of wild Horses. In South America, in particular, immense plains are inhabited by them, and, it is said, that so many as ten thousand are sometimes found in a single herd. They are always preceded by a leader, who directs their motions; and such is the regularity with which they perform their movements, that it seems almost as if they could not be surpassed by the best-trained cavalry.

" It is extremely dangerous for travellers to encounter a herd of this description. When unaccustomed to the sight of such an immense

multitude of animals, they cannot help feeling greatly alarmed at their rapid and apparently irresistible approach. Their trampling sounds like the loudest thunder; and such is the rapidity and impetuosity of their advance, that it seems to threaten instant destruction. Suddenly, however, they stop short, utter a loud and piercing neigh, and, with a rapid wheel in an opposite course, sometimes altogether disappear. On such occasions, it requires all the care of the traveller to prevent his Horses from breaking loose and escaping with the wild herd."

"I have heard that wild Horses are very watchful, Uncle Thomas."

"They are so, Harry. Knowing that they are ill-prepared for fighting, and that their safety is in flight, when they sleep, they always appoint one to act as sentinel. If it sees any suspicious object approach, it walks up to it for the purpose of ascertaining if there is danger, and, if necessary, to prevent a nearer advance. If, however, the assailant is not to be





"He dexterously throws the lasso in such a manner as to entangle the animal's hind legs."

deterred, the sentinel sounds the alarm by uttering a peculiar neigh, which rouses the whole herd, and all gallop away."

"Are they ever caught, then, Uncle Thomas?"

"Oh yes, Frank. In those countries where Horses are so plentiful the inhabitants seldom take the trouble to rear them, but, when they want one, mount upon an animal which has been accustomed to the sport, and gallop over the plain towards the herd, which is generally found at no great distance. Gradually he approaches some stragglers from the main body, and, having selected the animal which he wishes to possess, he dexterously throws the *lasso* (which is a long rope with a running noose, and which is firmly fixed to his saddle) in such a manner as to entangle its hind legs; and, with a sudden jerk, he pulls it over on its side. In an instant he jumps off his horse, wraps his *poncho*, or cloak, round the captive's head, fixes a bit into its mouth, and a saddle upon its back. He then removes the cloak, leaps into

the saddle, and the animal starts on its feet. In spite of its contortions and kickings, the hunter keeps his seat till the animal, having wearied itself out with its vain efforts, submits to the discipline of its captor, who seldom fails to reduce it to complete obedience."

"That is very dexterous indeed, Uncle Thomas; but surely all Horses are not originally found in this wild state? I have heard that the Arabians are famous for rearing them."

"Arabia has for a long time been noted, Frank, for the symmetry and speed of its Horses: so much attention has been paid, however, to the breeding of them in our own country, for the race-course as well as the hunting-field, that the English Horses are now almost unequalled both for speed and endurance.

"It is little wonder that the Arabian Horse should be very excellent, considering the care and attention which it receives, and the kindness and consideration with which it is treated. One of the best stories which I ever

heard of the love of an Arab for his steed is that related of one from whom one of our envoys wished to purchase his Horse.

"The animal was a bright bay mare, of extraordinary shape and beauty; and the owner, proud of its appearance and qualities, paraded it before the envoy's tent until it attracted his attention. On being asked if he would sell her, 'What will you give me?' was the reply. 'That depends upon her age; I suppose she is past five?' 'Guess again,' said he. 'Four?' 'Look at her mouth,' said the Arab, with a smile. On examination she was found to be rising three. This, from her size and symmetry, greatly enhanced her value. The envoy said, 'I will give you fifty tomans' (a coin nearly of the value of a sovereign). 'A little more, if you please,' said the fellow, somewhat entertained. 'Eighty—a hundred.' He shook his head and smiled. The officer at last came to two hundred tomans. 'Well,' said the Arab, 'you need not tempt me farther. You are a

rich elchee (nobleman); you have fine Horses, Camels, and Mules, and I am told you have loads of silver and gold. Now,' added he, 'you want my mare, but you shall not have her for all you have got.' He put spurs to his Horse, and was soon out of the reach of temptation.

"Swift as the Arabian Horses are, however, they are frequently matched by those of our own country. I say nothing about *Race Horses*, because, though some of them are recorded to have run at an amazing speed, the effort is generally continued for but a short time. Here is an instance of speed in a Horse which saved its unworthy master from the punishment due to his crimes:—

"One morning, about four o'clock, a gentleman was stopped and robbed by a highwayman named Nicks, at Gadshill, on the west side of Chatham. He was mounted on a bay mare of great speed and endurance, and as soon as he had accomplished his purpose, he instantly

started for Gravesend, where he was detained nearly an hour by the difficulty of getting a boat. He employed the interval to advantage however by baiting his Horse. From thence he crossed the Thames, and landing in Essex proceeded to Chelmsford where he again stopped about half an hour for refreshment. He then went to Braintree, Bocking, Withersfield, over the Downs to Cambridge, and, still pursuing the cross roads, he went by Fenney Stanton to Huntingdon, where he again rested about half an hour. Proceeding now on the north road, at a full gallop most of the way, he arrived at York the same afternoon, put off his boots and riding clothes, and went dressed to the bowling-green, where, among other promenaders, happened to be the Lord Mayor of the city. He there tried to do something particular, that his lordship might remember him, and asking what o'clock it was, the mayor informed him that it was a quarter past eight. Notwithstanding all these precautions, however, he was discovered, and tried

for the robbery ; he rested his defence on the fact of his being at York at the time mentioned, and argued from this, that it was impossible he could have been at Gadshill at the time of the robbery. The gentleman swore positively to the time and place at which the robbery was committed, but, on the other hand, the proof was equally clear that the prisoner was at York the same evening, and the jury acquitted him on the supposed impossibility of his having got so great a distance from Kent in so short a time."

"So that he owed his safety to the speed of his Horse, Uncle Thomas ? "

"He did so, Harry. The Horse can on occasion swim as well as most other animals, yet it never takes to the water unless urged to do so. Here is a story about a Horse saving the lives of many persons who had suffered shipwreck by being driven upon the rocks at the Cape of Good Hope, which, I am sure, will interest you as much for the perseverance and docility of the

animal, as for the benevolence and intrepidity of its owner:—

“A violent gale of wind setting in from north and north-west, a vessel in the roads dragged her anchors, was forced on the rocks, and bulged; and while the greater part of the crew fell an immediate sacrifice to the waves, the remainder were seen from the shore struggling for their lives, by clinging to the different pieces of the wreck. The sea ran dreadfully high, and broke over the sailors with such amazing fury, that no boat whatever could venture off to their assistance. Meanwhile a planter, considerably advanced in life, had come from his farm to be a spectator of the shipwreck; his heart was melted at the sight of the unhappy seamen, and knowing the bold and enterprising spirit of his Horse, and his particular excellence as a swimmer, he instantly determined to make a desperate effort for their deliverance. He alighted and blew a little brandy into his Horse’s nostrils, and again seating him-

self in the saddle, he instantly pushed into the midst of the breakers. At first both disappeared, but it was not long before they floated on the surface, and swam up to the wreck ; when taking with him two men, each of whom held by one of his stirrups, he brought them safe to shore. This perilous expedition he repeated no less than seven times, and saved fourteen lives ; but on his return the eighth time, being much fatigued, and meeting a most formidable wave, he lost his balance, and was overwhelmed in a moment. 'The Horse swam safely to land, but his gallant rider sank to rise no more.'

" That was very unfortunate, Uncle Thomas. I suppose the planter had been so fatigued by his previous exertions, that he had not strength to struggle with the strong waves."

" Most likely, Harry. I dare say the poor animal felt the loss of this kind owner very much, for the Horse soon becomes attached to his master, and exhibits traits of intelli-

gence and fidelity, certainly not surpassed by those of any other animal: for instance,—A gentleman, who was one dark night riding home through a wood, had the misfortune to strike his head against the branch of a tree, and fell from his Horse stunned by the blow. The noble animal immediately returned to the house which they had left, which stood about a mile distant. He found the door closed,—the family had retired to bed. He pawed at it, however, till one of them, hearing the noise, arose and opened it, and to his surprise, saw the Horse of his friend. No sooner was the door opened than the Horse turned round as if it wished to be followed; and the man, suspecting there was something wrong, followed the animal, which led him directly to the spot where its wounded master lay on the ground.

“ There is another story of a somewhat similar description in which he saved his master from perishing among the snow; it happened in the North of Scotland:—

"A gentleman connected with the Excise was returning home from one of his professional journeys. His way lay across a range of hills, the road over which was so blocked up with snow as to leave no trace of it discernible. Uncertain how to proceed, he resolved to trust to his Horse, and throwing loose the reins, allowed him to choose his course. The animal proceeded cautiously, and safely for some time, till, coming to a ravine, both Horse and rider sunk in a snow-wreath several fathoms deep.

"Stunned by the suddenness and depth of the descent, the gentleman lay for some time insensible. On recovering he found himself nearly three yards from the dangerous spot, with his faithful Horse standing over him, licking the snow from his face. He accounted for his extrication, by supposing that the bridle must have been attached to his person, but so completely had he lost all consciousness that, beyond the bare fact as stated, he had no

knowledge of the means by which he had made so remarkable an escape."

" It was at any rate very kind in the Horse to clear away the snow, Uncle Thomas."

" No doubt of it, John, and perhaps he owed his life quite as much to this act of kindness, as to being pulled out of the ravine. He might have been as certainly choked by the snow out of it as in it. Sometimes the Horse becomes much attached to the animals with which it associates, and its feelings of friendship are as powerful as those of the dog. A gentleman of Bristol had a Greyhound, which slept in the same stable and contracted a very great intimacy, with a fine Hunter. When the dog was taken out, the horse neighed wistfully after it, and seemed to long for its return ; he welcomed it home with a neigh ; the greyhound ran up to the horse and licked him ; the horse, in return, scratched the greyhound's back with his teeth. On one occasion, when the groom had the pair out for exercise, a large dog attacked the

greyhound, bore him to the ground, and seemed likely to worry him, when the horse threw back his ears, rushed forward, seized the strange dog by the back, and flung him to a distance, which so terrified the aggressor, that he at once desisted and made off."

" That was very kind, Uncle Thomas. I like to hear of such instances of friendship between animals."

" Such a docile animal as the Horse, Boys, can readily be trained to particular habits, and does not readily forget them, however disreputable. There is an odd story to illustrate this:—

" About the middle of last century, a Scottish Lawyer had occasion to visit the metropolis. At that period such journeys were usually performed on horseback, and the traveller might either ride post, or if willing to travel economically he bought a horse before setting out, and sold it at the end of his journey. The lawyer had chosen the latter mode of travelling, and sold the animal on which he rode

from Scotland as soon as he arrived in London. With a view to his return, he went to Smithfield to purchase a Horse. About dusk a handsome one was offered at so cheap a rate that he suspected the soundness of the animal, but being able to discover no blemish, he became the purchaser.

“ Next morning, he set out on his journey ; the Horse had excellent paces, and our traveller while riding over the few first miles, where the road was well frequented, did not fail to congratulate himself on his good fortune, which had led him to make so advantageous a bargain.

“ They arrived at last at Finchley Common, and at a place where the road ran down a slight eminence, and up another, the lawyer met a clergyman driving a one-horse chaise. There was nobody within sight, and the Horse by his conduct instantly discovered the profession of his former owner. Instead of pursuing his journey, he ran close up to the chaise and stopped it, having no doubt but his rider would embrace

so favourable an opportunity for exercising his calling. The clergyman seemed of the same opinion, produced his purse unasked, and assured the astonished lawyer that it was quite unnecessary to draw his pistol, as he did not intend to offer any resistance. The traveller rallied his Horse, and with many apologies to the gentleman he had so innocently and unwillingly affrighted, pursued his journey.

“They had not proceeded far till the Horse again made the same suspicious approach to a coach, from the window of which a blunderbuss was levelled, with denunciations of death and destruction to the hapless and perplexed rider. In short, after his life had been several times endangered by the suspicions to which the conduct of his Horse gave rise, and his liberty as often threatened by the peace officers, who were disposed to apprehend him as a notorious highwayman who had been the former owner of the Horse, he was obliged to part with the inauspicious animal at a low price, and to pur-

chase, for a high sum, one less beautiful, but not accustomed to such dangerous habits."

"Capital, Uncle Thomas! I should have liked to have seen the perplexed look of the poor lawyer, when he saw the blunderbuss make its appearance at the carriage window!"

"There is one other story about the Horse, Boys, illustrative of its kindness and consideration, which I must tell you before we leave this intelligent and docile animal. A Horse which was remarkable for the peculiarity of its temper, and for its antipathy to strangers, among other bad propensities, constantly resisted the attempts of the groom to trim its fetlocks. This circumstance happened to be mentioned by its owner in conversation, in the presence of his youngest child, a very few years old, when he defied any man to perform the operation unassisted. The father next day, in passing through the stable-yard, beheld with the utmost distress, the infant employed with a pair of scissors attempting to clip the fetlocks of the

hind legs of this vicious hunter—an operation which had been always performed with great danger, even by a number of men. Instead, however, of exhibiting his usual vicious disposition, the Horse, in the present case, was looking with the greatest complacency on the little groom, who soon after, to the very great relief of his father, walked off unhurt."

"That was indeed a singular instance of docility, Uncle Thomas!"

"It was so, Frank, and many more might be told, but, I must stop for the evening—good night, Boys."

"Good night, Uncle Thomas!"

CHAPTER II.

UNCLE THOMAS TELLS ABOUT THE HABITS OF THE BEAVER; ALSO ABOUT THE CURIOUS NESTS OF THE SOCIALE GROSBEAK; AND GIVES A LONG AND ENTERTAINING ACCOUNT OF THE WHITE ANT OF AFRICA, AND THE IMPORTANT PART WHICH IT ACTS IN THE ECONOMY OF NATURE.

“ GOOD evening, Boys! I am going to tell you about a very singular animal to-night—singular both in its conformation and its habits. I allude to the Beaver.”

“ Oh, we shall be so glad to hear about the Beaver, Uncle Thomas. I have sometimes wondered what sort of an animal it is. It is of its skin that hats are made—is it not? ”

“ It is so, Harry—at least it is of the fur with which its skin is covered. But our business now is with the Beaver itself. I think we shall

get on better by confining our attention to the Habits and Instincts of the animal at present, leaving its uses for future consideration."

"Very well, Uncle Thomas, we are all attention."

"The Beaver, which is now only to be found in the more inaccessible parts of America, and the northern countries of Europe, affords a curious instance of what may be called a compound structure. It has the fore-feet of a land animal, and the hind ones of an aquatic one—the latter only being webbed. Its tail is covered with scales like a fish, and serves to direct its course in the water, in which it spends much of its time.

"On the rivers where they abound, they form societies sometimes consisting of upwards of two hundred. They begin to assemble about the months of July or August, and generally choose for the place of their future habitation the side of a lake or river. If a lake in which the water is always pretty nearly of a uniform

level, they dispense with building a dam, but if the place they fix upon be the banks of a river, which is liable to fluctuations in height; they immediately set about constructing a pier or dam to confine the water, so that they may always have a good supply. This dam, they build more or less solid according to the strength of the current, always taking care to make it of the form which offers the greatest resistance to the flowing of the water."

"That is very singular, Uncle Thomas. I suppose it is their Instinct which teaches them to act in this manner."

"You are right, Frank. Well, the mode in which they set about constructing the dam is this: having fixed upon the spot they go into the neighbouring forest, and cut quantities of the smaller trees, which they forthwith convey to the place selected, and having fixed them in the earth, interweave them strongly and closely, filling up all the crevices with mud and stones, so as soon to make a most compact structure.

Sometimes even the trees take root, and the birds build their nests in the branches."

" It must be a work of very great labour, to make a dam of this sort, Uncle Thomas."

" The labour is very considerable, Boys ; but the power which, for want of a better name, we call Instinct, comes wonderfully to their aid. For instance, it has been observed that they seek all the trees which they want, on the banks of the river, higher up than their building, so that having once got them into the water, they are easily floated to it. The same wonderful power also teaches them to gnaw the trees, and cause them to fall on the side nearest the water, so as to convey them to it with the least possible labour."

" Very good, Uncle Thomas."

" When the Beavers have finished the dam, they then proceed to construct houses for themselves. First they dig a foundation of a size proportioned to the number of the family which is to inhabit it. They then form the walls of earth

and stones, mixed with billets of wood crossing each other, and thus tying the fabric together just in the same way as you sometimes see masons do in building human dwellings. Their huts which are made to accommodate about four old ones, and six or eight young, are generally shaped something like the figure of a hay-cock, from four to seven feet high, and eight or nine wide, and they have usually several entrances—one or more opening into the river or lake, below the surface of the water, and one communicating with any bushes or brushwood which may be at hand, so as to afford the means of escape in case of attack either on the land or water side."

"They must be pretty safe then, Uncle Thomas, since they can so readily escape."

"They are secure enough, Frank, so long as they have only irrational or half-reasoning animals to contend with; but when man, armed with the power before which mere Instinct must at all times bow, attacks them, they are

very easily overcome. Shall I tell you how the hunters capture them?"

"If you please, Uncle Thomas."

"Very well. I must first tell you that the skin of the Beaver is most valuable during winter, as the fur is then thicker and finer than during the summer. They are therefore very little, if at all, molested during this season by the hunters. When winter sets in however, and the lakes and rivers are frozen over, the hunters set out to seek for the beaver colonies, and, having found them, they make a number of holes in the ice. They then break down the huts, and the animals escape into the water as a place of safety. As they cannot remain long under water, however, they soon have occasion to come to the surface to breathe, and of course make for the holes which the hunters have formed in the ice, when some of the latter, who are waiting in readiness, knock them on the head."

"But, Uncle Thomas, is it not very cruel to

kill the Beavers so? They feed entirely on vegetables, I believe, and do no harm to any one."

" You might say the same, John, of the Sheep on the downs ; the one is not more cruel than the other : both are useful to man, and furnish him with food as well as raiment, and both were, of course, included in the 'dominion' which God originally gave to man ' over the beasts of the field.' "

" Is the Beaver used for food, then, Uncle Thomas?"

" It is, John, and except during a small part of the year, when it feeds on the root of the water-lily, which communicates a peculiar flavour to its flesh, it is said to be very palatable. It is, however, principally for its fur that it is hunted ; the skin, even, is of little value, being coarser and looser in texture, and less applicable to general uses, than that of many other animals. I dare say you have often seen it made into gloves."

" Oh yes, Uncle Thomas?"

“ I will now, Boys, read to you an account of a tame Beaver, which its owner, Mr. Broderip, communicated to ‘ The Gardens and Menageries of the Zoological Society :’—

“ The animal arrived in this country in the winter of 1825, very young, being small and woolly, and without the covering of long hair, which marks the adult Beaver. It was the sole survivor of five or six which were shipped at the same time, and was in a very pitiable condition. Good treatment soon made it familiar. When called by its name, ‘ Binny,’ it generally answered with a little cry, and came to its owner. The hearth rug was its favourite haunt, and thereon it would lie, stretched out, sometimes on its back, and sometimes flat on its belly, but always near its master. The building Instinct showed itself immediately after it was let out of its cage, and materials were placed in its way,—and this, before it had been a week in its new quarters. Its strength, even before it was half grown, was great. It

would drag along a large sweeping-brush, or a warming-pan, grasping the handle with his teeth, so that the load came over its shoulder, and advancing in an oblique direction, till it arrived at the point where it wished to place it. The long and large materials were always taken first, and two of the longest were generally laid crosswise, with one of the ends of each touching the wall, and the other ends projecting out into the room. The area formed by the crossed brushes and the wall he would fill up with hand-brushes, rush baskets, books, boots, sticks, cloths, dried turf, or any thing portable. As the work grew high, he supported himself on his tail, which propped him up admirably: and he would often, after laying on one of his building materials, sit up over against it, apparently to consider his work, or, as the country people say, 'judge it.' This pause was sometimes followed by changing the position of the material 'judged,' and sometimes it was left in its place. After he had piled

up his materials in one part of the room (for he generally chose the same place), he proceeded to wall up the space between the feet of a chest of drawers which stood at a little distance from it, high enough on its legs to make the bottom a roof for him; using for this purpose dried turf and sticks, which he laid very even, and filling up the interstices with bits of coal, hay, cloth, or any thing he could pick up. This last place he seemed to appropriate for his dwelling; the former work seemed to be intended for a dam. When he had walled up the space between the feet of the chest of drawers, he proceeded to carry in sticks, clothes, hay, cotton, and to make a nest; and, when he had done, he would sit up under the drawers, and comb himself with the nails of his hind feet. In this operation that which appeared at first to be a malformation, was shown to be a beautiful adaptation to the necessities of the animal. The huge webbed hind feet often turn in, so as to give the appearance of deformities; but

if the toes were straight, instead of being incurved, the animal could not use them for the purpose of keeping its fur in order, and cleansing it from dirt and moisture.

"Binny generally carried small and light articles between his right fore leg and his chin, walking on the other three legs; and large masses, which he could not grasp readily with his teeth, he pushed forwards, leaning against them with his right fore paw and his chin. He never carried anything on his tail, which he liked to dip in water, but he was not fond of plunging in his whole body. If his tail was kept moist, he never cared to drink, but if it was kept dry, it became hot and the animal appeared distressed, and would drink a great deal. It is not impossible that the tail may have the power of absorbing water like the skin of frogs, though it must be owned, that the scaly integument which invests that member has not much of the character which generally belongs to absorbing surfaces.

"Bread, and bread and milk, and sugar, formed the principal part of Binny's food ; but he was very fond of succulent fruits and roots. He was a most entertaining creature ; and some highly comic scenes occurred between the worthy, but slow Beaver, and a light and airy macauco, that was kept in the same apartment."

"I think I have read, Uncle Thomas, that Beavers use their tails as trowels to plaster their houses, and as sledges to carry the materials to build their huts."

"I dare say, you have, Frank ; but such stories are mere fables told by the ignorant to excite wonder in the minds of the credulous. No such operations have been observed by the most accurate observers of the animal's habits. The wonderful Instinct which they display in building their houses, and in laying up a store of food as a provision against winter are quite sufficient to excite our wonder and admiration, without having recourse to false and exaggerated statements."

“ The building Instinct of the Beaver is very singular, Uncle Thomas. Is it displayed by any other animal ?”

“ All animals exhibit it more or less, Harry, and birds in particular, in the construction of their nests, some of which are very curious indeed ; perhaps one of the most striking instances is that of the Sociable Grosbeak, a bird which is found in the interior of the Cape of Good Hope. They construct their nests under one roof, which they form of the branches of some tall and wide-spreading tree, thatching it all over as it were, with a species of grass.

“ When they have got their habitation fairly covered in they lay out the inside, according to some travellers, into regular streets, with nests on both sides, about a couple of inches apart from each other. In one respect, however, they differ from the Beaver, they do not appear to lay up a common store of food, the nature of the climate not rendering such a precaution necessary.

"Here is the account of one of these nests furnished by a gentleman who minutely examined it:—

"I observed on the way a tree with an enormous nest of those birds to which I have given the appellation of republicans; and, as soon as I arrived at my camp, I despatched a few men, with a waggon, to bring it to me, that I might open the hive, and examine the structure in its minutest parts. When it arrived, I cut it in pieces with a hatchet, and found that the chief portion of it consisted of a mass of Boshman's grass, without any mixture, but so compact and firmly basketed together as to be impenetrable to the rain. This is the commencement of the structure; and each bird builds its particular nest under this canopy. But the nests are formed only beneath the eaves of the canopy, the upper surface remaining void, without, however, being useless; for, as it has a projecting rim, and is a little inclined, it serves to let the rain-water

run off, and preserves each little dwelling from the wet. Figure to yourself a huge irregular sloping roof, and all the eaves of which are completely covered with nests, crowded one against another, and you will have a tolerably accurate idea of these singular edifices.

“ Each individual nest is three or four inches in diameter, which is sufficient for the bird. But as they are all in contact with one another, around the eaves, they appear to the eye to form but one building, and are distinguishable from each other only by a little external aperture, which serves as an entrance to the nest ; and even this is sometimes common to three different nests, one of which is situated at the bottom, and the other two at the sides.

“ The large nest which I examined was one of the most considerable which I had seen anywhere on my journey, and contained three hundred and twenty inhabited cells.”

“ Well, Uncle Thomas, that is very curious ; I don’t know which most to admire. I rather

incline to the Beaver however, because of the winter store of food which it lays up."

"There is another little animal, Boys, which displays the building instinct so remarkably, that I must tell you something about it before we part."

"Which is it, Uncle Thomas?"

"It is the White Ant of Africa; a little creature, scarcely, if at all, exceeding in size the Ants of our own country, yet they construct large nests of a conical or sugar-loaf shape, sometimes from ten to twelve feet high; and one species builds them so strong and compact, that even when they are raised to little more than half their height, the wild-bulls of the country use them as sentinel posts to watch over the safety of the herd which grazes below.

"Mr. Smeathman, a naturalist who examined those Ants nests with great care, states, that on one occasion he and four men stood on the top of one of them. So you may guess how strong they are."

"What are they made of, Uncle Thomas? They must be very curious structures. How very different from the ant hills of England!"

"Very different, indeed, John. They are made of clay and sand, and as in such a luxuriant climate they soon become coated over with grass, they quickly assume the appearance of hay-cocks. They are indeed very remarkable structures, whether we consider them externally or internally, and are said to excel in the skilfulness of their construction and in the niceness of their adaptation to the wants of the animal, those of the Beaver and the Bee in the same proportion as the habitations of the most polished European nations excel the huts of the rude inhabitants of the country where the *Termites* or white ants abound; while, in regard to mere size, Mr. Smeathman calculates that, supposing a man's ordinary height to be six feet, the nests of these creatures may be considered to bear the same relation to their size as that of a man does to a building raised

to four times the height of the largest Egyptian pyramids!"

"That is enormous, Uncle Thomas!"

"It is indeed, Frank; but strange though it is, in this point of view, the interior of the nest is even more remarkable, many parts of its construction falling little short of human ingenuity. I need not attempt to describe all its arrangements, which, without a plan, would be nearly unintelligible; but there is one device so admirable that I must point it out to you. The nest is formed of two floors, as it were, and all round the walls are galleries perforated in various winding directions, and leading to the store-houses of the colony, or to the nurseries where the eggs are deposited. As it is sometimes convenient, however, to reach the galleries which open from the upper roof without threading all the intricacies of these winding passages, they construct a bridge of a single arch, between the floor of the nest and its dome, if I may so call it, and thus at once reach the

upper roof, from which these passages diverge. They are thus saved much labour, in transporting provisions, and in bearing the eggs to the places where they are to remain till they are hatched."

"That is indeed admirable, Uncle Thomas ; they must be very curious animals."

"They divide themselves, Frank, into different classes, in the same way as Bees ; choosing a queen, and some of them acting as workers, &c. But the White Ants have a class to which there is nothing similar among any other race of insects. These are what Smeathman calls soldiers, from the duties which they perform. They are much less numerous than the workers, being somewhat in the proportion of one in one hundred. The duty of the soldier-insects is to protect the nest when it is attacked. They are furnished with long and slender jaws, and when enraged bite very fiercely, and sometimes drive off the negroes who may have attacked them, and even white people suffer

severely,—a bite even through the stocking bleeding profusely. Some one who observed the colony alarmed, by having part of the nest broken down, gives the following account of the subsequent operations. One of the soldiers first makes his appearance, as if to see if the enemy be gone, and to learn whence the attack proceeds. By and by two or three others follow, and soon afterwards a numerous body rushes out, which increases in number so long as the attack is continued. They are at this time in a state of the most violent agitation; some employed in beating upon the building with their mandibles, so as to make a noise which may be distinctly heard at the distance of three or four feet. Whenever the attack is discontinued, the soldiers retire, and quickly re-appear followed by another class which may be called labourers, which hasten in various directions towards the breach, each with a burden of mortar ready tempered, and thus they soon repair the damage. Besides the duty of pro-

tecting the colony, the soldiers seem to act as overseers of the work, one being generally in attendance on every six or eight hundred labourers. One, who may be looked on as commander in chief, takes up his station close to the wall which they are repairing, and frequently repeats the beating which I just mentioned, which is instantly answered by a loud hiss from all the labourers within the dome,—those at work working with redoubled energy.”

“But, Uncle Thomas, what can be the use of such animals as White Ants? I really cannot see what use they are for.”

“Well, John, I confess I do not much wonder at your question though in putting it, you have forgotten that God makes nothing in vain. Mr. Smeathman, who tells us so much about these curious animals, has answered you by anticipation; and his answer is in such a spirit that I cannot do better than read it to you:—

"It may appear surprising," he says, "how a Being perfectly good should have created animals which seem to serve no other end but to spread destruction and desolation wherever they go. But let us be cautious in suspecting any imperfection in the FATHER of the UNIVERSE. What at first sight may seem only productive of mischief will, upon mature deliberation, be found worthy of that wisdom which planned the most beautiful parts of the world. Many poisons are valuable medicines. Storms are beneficial; and diseases often promote life. These *Termites* are indeed frequently pernicious to mankind, but they are also very useful and even necessary. One valuable purpose which they serve is to destroy decayed trees and other substances which, if left on the surface of the ground in hot climates, would in a short time pollute the air. In this respect they resemble very much the common flies, which are regarded by mankind in general as noxious and, albeit, as useless beings in crea-

tion. But this is certainly for want of consideration. There are not probably in all nature animals of more importance, and it would not be difficult to prove that we should feel the want of one or two large quadrupeds much less than of one or two species of these despicable-looking insects. Mankind in general are sensible that nothing is more disagreeable or more pestiferous than putrid substances; and it is apparent to all who have made observation, that those little insects contribute more to the quick dissolution and dispersion of putrescent matter than any other. They are so necessary in all hot climates, that even in the open fields a dead animal or small putrid substance cannot be laid upon the ground two minutes before it will be covered with flies and their maggots, which instantly entering, quickly devour one part, and perforating the rest in various directions, expose the whole to be much sooner decomposed by the elements. Thus it is with the Termites. The

rapid vegetation in hot climates, of which no idea can be formed by any thing to be seen in this, is equalled by as great a degree of destruction from natural as well as accidental causes. It seems apparent that when anything whatever has arrived at its last degree of perfection, the Creator has decreed that it shall be wholly destroyed as soon as possible, that the face of nature may be speedily adorned with fresh productions in the bloom of spring, or the pride of summer; so when trees and even woods are in part destroyed by tornadoes or fire, it is wonderful to observe how many agents are employed in hastening the total dissolution of the rest. But in hot climates there are none so expert, or who do their business so expeditiously and effectually, as these insects, which in a few weeks destroy and carry away the bodies of large trees, without leaving a particle behind; thus clearing the place for other vegetables which soon fill up every vacancy: and in places where two or three years before there has been

a populous town, if the inhabitants, as is frequently the case, have chosen to abandon it, there shall be a very thick wood, and not a vestige of a post to be seen, unless the wood has been of a species which from its hardness is called iron wood."

"Thank you, Uncle Thomas. I see, I was quite wrong in supposing that the Ants are of no use. I really did not imagine that they could have been so serviceable."

CHAPTER III.

UNCLE THOMAS DESCRIBES THE MANNER IN WHICH WILD ELEPHANTS ARE CAUGHT, AND RELATED SOME CURIOUS STORIES OF THE CUNNING, AFFECTION, AND INTELLIGENCE OF THE ELEPHANT.

“ WELL, Boys, you are once more welcome!— I am going to tell you some stories about the Elephant to night, which I hope will interest you quite as much as those which I told you about the Dog. Next to the Dog, the Elephant is one of the most intelligent animals; some of his actions, indeed, seem to be rather the result of reason than mere instinct. But I must first tell you about the animal in its native forests.

“ In the luxuriant forests with which a large portion of Asia is covered, this huge animal reigns supreme. Its size and strength easily

enable it to overcome the most formidable opponents. The intelligence with which it has been endowed by its Creator would make it a most formidable enemy to man, but that the same All-wise Being has graciously created it with peaceful and gentle feelings. In its native forests it roams about without seeking to molest any one, and even when caught it very soon becomes gentle and obedient.

“ In the East Indies the Elephant is in very general use as a beast of burden. For this purpose it is hunted and caught in great numbers by the Natives, who employ some very ingenious devices to deceive them, and to drive them into the ambuscades which they form for them. The manner in which whole herds are captured is as follows :—

“ When the herd is discovered by parties who are sent out in search of it, they first of all note the direction in which it is ranging, as, if their food is plentiful, the quiet unsuspecting animals generally continue to advance in one

direction for miles together: of this the hunters take advantage and immediately proceed to construct at a considerable distance in front a series of enclosures, into which it is their object to drive them.

“ When every thing is prepared, the hunters sometimes to the number of several hundreds divide themselves into small parties, and form a large circle, so as to surround the herd. Each party generally consists of three men, whose duty it is to light a fire and to clear a footpath between their station and that of their neighbours, so that in this way a communication is kept up by the whole circle, and assistance can at once be afforded at any point.

“ New circles are constantly formed at short distances in advance, so as gradually to drive the animals in the required direction. The hunters are all the while concealed by the luxuriant brushwood or jungle, and do not show themselves to the Elephants at all, but urge

them forward by the use of drums, rattles, &c. &c., from the noise of which the animals seek to escape, and thus wander on, feeding as they proceed, toward the toils which are prepared for them.

“ The *keddah*, or trap as it may be called, consists of three enclosures, each formed of strong stockades on the outside of deep ditches; the innermost one being the strongest, because by the time they arrive in it, the Elephants are generally in a state of great excitement, and would soon break down a frail barrier, and make their escape.

“ As soon as the herd has entered the first enclosure, strong barricades are erected across the entrance; and as there is no ditch at this point, the hunters take advantage of the intense dread which the animal has of fire, to scare them from this most vulnerable part of the fortification. Fires are gradually lit all round the first enclosure, so that the only way of escape which is left is by the entrance to the second.

" At first, as if profiting by their former experience they generally shun the entrance to the second of the series, but at last seeing no other chance of escape, the leader of the herd ventures forward, and the rest follow. The gate is instantly shut, and they are in the same manner driven into the third enclosure. Finding no outlet from this they become desperate, scream with tremendous violence, and seek to escape by furiously attacking the sides of the stockade. At all points, however, they are repulsed by lighted fires, and the tumultuous and exulting shouts of the triumphant hunters.

" In this place of confinement they remain for several days. When their excitement has somewhat subsided they are enticed one by one to enter a narrow passage leading back to the second enclosure. As soon as one ventures in, the entrance is closed, and as the passage is so narrow that it cannot turn round, it soon fatigues itself by unavailing exertions to beat

down the barriers by which it is confined. Strong ropes with running nooses are now laid down, and no sooner does the animal put his foot within one of them, than the rope is drawn tight by some of the hunters who are stationed on a small scaffold, which has in the mean time been raised over the gateway. In the same manner his other feet are secured. When this has been effected, some of the hunters venture to approach, and tie his hind legs together. Having thus secured him, they are able with comparative safety to complete their capture. He is now placed between two tame Elephants, led away to the forest and fastened to a tree; and the same operation is repeated, till the whole herd has been secured. So long as the animals between which he is led away prisoner remain with him the captive is comparatively quiet, but when he sees them depart, he is agitated with all the horrors of despair, and makes the most extravagant attempts to regain his liberty. For some time he refuses to

eat, but gradually becomes resigned, and feeds freely.

“A keeper is appointed to each animal, as they are secured. His first object is to gain its confidence; supplying it regularly with food, pouring water over its body to keep it cool, and gradually accustoming it to caresses. In the course of five or six weeks he generally obtains a complete ascendancy over it; its fetters are removed by degrees, it knows his voice and obeys him, and is then gradually instructed in its future labours.”

“Thank you, Uncle Thomas. I think that we now understand all about Elephant-hunting. I could not imagine how the hunters managed to secure such a huge animal. It seems to be no such difficult task after all.”

“It seems easy enough from description, Frank; but it sometimes happens that they break loose, and, irritated by their efforts to escape, they range about in the most furious manner, and as they are very cunning animals.

it requires all the circumspection of the hunters to counteract their schemes. I recollect a story which displays the sagacity and cunning of the Elephant in a very strong light:—

“ During the siege of Bhurtpore, in the year 1805, when the British army, with its countless host of followers and attendants, and thousands of cattle, had been for a long time before the city, the approach of the warm season and of the dry hot winds caused the quantity of water in the neighbourhood of the camps to begin to fail; the ponds or tanks had dried up, and no more water was left than the immense wells of the country could furnish. The multitude of men and cattle that were unceasingly at the wells occasioned no little struggle for priority in procuring the supply, and the consequent confusion on the spot was frequently very considerable. On one occasion, two Elephant-drivers, each with his Elephant, the one remarkably large and strong, and the other comparatively

small and weak, were at the well together; the smaller animal had been provided by his master with a bucket for the occasion, which he carried at the end of his trunk; but the other one being unprovided with any thing of the kind, either spontaneously, or by desire of his keeper, seized the bucket, and easily wrested it from his less powerful opponent. The latter was too sensible of his inferiority openly to resist the insult, though it was obvious that he felt it; but great squabbling and abuse ensued between the keepers.

“ At length, the weaker animal, watching the opportunity when the other was standing with his side to the well, retired backwards a few paces, in a very quiet and unsuspecting manner, and then rushing forward with all his might, drove his head against the side of the other, and fairly pushed him into the well. It may easily be imagined that great inconvenience was immediately experienced, and serious apprehensions quickly followed, that the water

in the well, on which the existence of so many seemed in a great measure to depend, would be spoiled by the unwieldy brute which was precipitated into it; and as the surface of the water was nearly twenty feet below the level of the ground, there did not appear to be any means that could be adopted to get the animal out by main force, without the risk of injuring him. There were many feet of water below the Elephant, who floated at ease on its surface, and experiencing considerable pleasure from his cool retreat, he evinced but little inclination to lend any assistance towards his rescue.

“A vast number of fascines (bundles of wood) had been employed by the army in conducting the siege; and at length it occurred to the Elephant-keeper, that a sufficient number of these might be lowered into the well, on which the animal might be raised to the top, if it could be made to lay them in regular succession under his feet. Permission having accordingly been obtained from the engineers

to use the fascines, the keeper by means of that extraordinary ascendancy which these men attain over their charge, joined with the intellectual resources of the animal itself, soon taught it how to proceed; and the Elephant began quickly to place each fascine, as it was lowered, under him, in succession until, in a short time, he was able to stand upon them. By this time, however, the cunning brute enjoying the coolness of his situation, after the heat and partial privation of water to which he had been lately exposed, was unwilling to work any longer; and all the threats of his keeper could not induce him to place another fascine. The man then opposed cunning to cunning, and began to caress and praise the Elephant; and what he could not effect by threats he was enabled to do by the repeated promise of plenty of arrack, a spirituous beverage composed of rum, of which the Elephant is very fond. Incited by this, the animal again set to work, raised himself considerably higher, until,

by a partial removal of the masonry round the top of the well, he was enabled to step out, after having been in the water about fourteen hours."

"The keepers seem to attain great ascendancy over the animals, Uncle Thomas."

"The attachment of the Elephant to its keeper, and the command which some of those men acquire over the affections of the animal is very extraordinary. The mere sound of the keeper's voice has been known to reclaim an animal which had escaped from domestication and resumed its original freedom:—

"A female Elephant, belonging to a gentleman in Calcutta, who was ordered from the upper country to Chittagong, in the route thither, broke loose from her keeper, and, making her way to the woods, was lost. The unhappy keeper tried every means to vindicate himself, but his master, angry at the loss of so valuable an animal, refused to listen to any of his excuses, branded him with dishonesty,

and charged him with having sold the Elephant. The unfortunate keeper was tried for the theft, and being convicted, was condemned to work on the roads for life, and his wife and children sold for slaves.

" About twelve years after this event, this man, who was known to be well acquainted with taming Elephants, was sent into the country with a party to assist in catching wild ones. They at last came upon a herd, amongst which the man fancied he saw the Elephant, for the loss of which he had been condemned. He resolved to approach it, nor could the strongest remonstrances of the party dissuade him from the attempt. As he advanced towards the animal, he called her by name when she immediately recognised his voice; she waved her trunk in the air as a token of salutation, and kneeling down, allowed him to mount her neck. She afterwards assisted in taking other Elephants, and decoyed into the trap three young ones, to which she had given

birth since her escape. The keeper returned to his master with the Elephant, and the singular circumstances attending her recovery being told, he regained his character ; and, as a recompense for his unmerited sufferings, had a pension settled on him for life."

" That was an instance of rare good fortune, Uncle Thomas. How very curious that he should fall in with the herd in which his own Elephant was ! "

" It was very fortunate indeed, Frank. It was not a little curious too that the Elephant should recognise him after so long a period. But the attachment which they show to their keepers is sometimes very great. One which in a moment of rage killed its keeper, a few years ago, adopted his son as its *carnac* or driver, and would allow no one else to assume his place. The wife of the unfortunate man who witnessed the dreadful scene, in her frenzy took her two children, and threw them at the feet of the Elephant, saying, ' As you have slain my hus-

band, take my life also, as well as that of my children!' The animal, which seemed to understand her distress, immediately became calm, and as if stung with remorse, took up the eldest boy with its trunk, and placed him on its neck, adopted him for its carnac, and never afterwards allowed another to occupy that seat."

"That was at least making all the reparation in its power, Uncle 'Thomas.'

"There is one or two other stories about the Elephant, Boys, showing that he knows how to revenge an insult, which I must tell you before you go:—

"A merchant at Bencoolen kept a tame Elephant, which was so exceedingly gentle in his habits, that he was permitted to go at large. This huge animal used to walk about the streets in the most quiet and orderly manner, and paid many visits through the city to people who were kind to him. Two cobblers having taken an ill will to this inoffensive creature, several times pricked him on the proboscis with



"He filled his trunk with water, and advancing in his ordinary manner, spouted the whole puddle over them."

their awls, when he saluted them in passing. The noble animal did not punish them in the manner he might have done, and seemed to think they were too contemptible for his anger. He took other means to reward them for their cruelty. He walked deliberately away, and having filled his trunk with a quantity of dirty water, advanced towards them in his ordinary manner, and spouted the whole of the puddle over them. The punishment was highly applauded by those who witnessed it, and the poor cobblers were laughed at for their pains."

" Ha ! ha ! ha ! He must have been a very knowing animal, Uncle Thomas. I dare say the cobblers behaved better in future."

" I dare say they would, Boys. Here is another story of the same description, but the trickster did not escape so easily:—

" A person, in the island of Ceylon, who lived near a place where Elephants were daily led to water, and often sat at the door of his house, used occasionally to give one of these animals

some fig leaves, of which Elephants are very fond. One day he took it into his head to play the Elephant a trick. He wrapped a stone round with fig leaves, and said to the driver, ‘This time I will give him a stone to eat, and see how it will agree with him.’ The driver told him that the Elephant would not be such a fool as to swallow a stone. The man, however, handed it the packet, but no sooner had it touched it with its trunk, than it immediately let it fall to the ground. ‘You see,’ said the keeper, ‘that I was right;’ and without farther remark he drove away his Elephants. After they were watered, he was conducting them again to their stable. The man who had played the Elephant the trick was still sitting at his door, when, before he was aware, the animal ran at him, threw his trunk around his body, and dashing him to the ground trampled him to death.”

“ Shocking! Uncle Thomas. I shall be afraid to go near an Elephant next time I see one!”

“ It ought at least to teach you not to try its temper too much, John. It is always a dangerous experiment, especially with such a large and powerful animal. But we must stop for the evening.”

“ Good night, Uncle Thomas!”

CHAPTER IV.

UNCLE THOMAS INTRODUCES TO THE NOTICE OF HIS LITTLE AUDIENCE THE
ETTRICK SHEPHERD'S STORIES ABOUT SHEEP; AND TELLS THEM SOME
INTERESTING STORIES ABOUT THE GOAT, AND ITS PECULIARITIES.

“ I DARE say, Boys, you have not forgotten the Ettrick Shepherd's wonderful stories about his Dogs. Some of those which he relates about Sheep are equally remarkable, and as he tells them in the same pleasing style, I think I cannot do better than read to you the chapter in ‘The Shepherd's Calendar’ which he devotes to this animal.”

“ Thank you, Uncle Thomas. We remember very well his stories about Sirrah and Hector and Chieftain, and the old Shepherd's grief at parting with his dog.”

“ That's right; Boys, I am happy to think

that you do not forget what I tell you. But listen to the Ettrick Shepherd :—

“ The Sheep has scarcely any marked character save that of natural affection, of which it possesses a very great share. It is otherwise a stupid indifferent animal, having few wants, and fewer expedients. The old black-faced, or forest breed, have far more powerful capabilities than any of the finer breeds that have been introduced into Scotland, and, therefore, the few anecdotes that I have to relate shall be confined to them.

“ So strong is the attachment of Sheep to the place where they have been bred, that I have heard of their returning from Yorkshire to the Highlands. I was always somewhat inclined to suspect that they might have been lost by the way, but it is certain however, that when once one or a few Sheep get away from the rest of their acquaintances, they return homeward with great eagerness and perseverance. I have lived beside a drove-road the

better part of my life, and many stragglers have I seen bending their steps northward in the spring of the year. A shepherd rarely sees these journeyers twice ; if he sees them, and stops them in the morning, they are gone long before night ; and if he sees them at night, they will be gone many miles before morning. This strong attachment to the place of their nativity is much more predominant in our old aboriginal breed than in any of the other kinds with which I am acquainted.

“ The most singular instance that I know of, to be quite well authenticated, is that of a black Ewe, that returned with her lamb from a farm in the head of Glen-Lyon, to the farm of Harehope, in Tweeddale, and accomplished the journey in nine days. She was soon missed by her owner, and a shepherd was despatched in pursuit of her, who followed her all the way to Crieff, where he gave her up and returned home. He got intelligence of her all the way, and every one told him that

she absolutely persisted in travelling on,—she would not be stopped, regarding neither sheep nor shepherd by the way. Her lamb was often far behind, and she had constantly to urge it on by impatient bleating. She unluckily came to Stirling on the morning of a great annual fair, about the end of May, and judging it imprudent to venture through the crowd with her lamb, she halted on the north side of the town the whole day, where she was seen by hundreds, lying close by the road-side. But next morning, when all was quiet, a little after the break of day, she was observed stealing quietly through the town, in apparent terror of the dogs that were prowling about the street. The last time she was seen on the road was at a toll-bar near St. Ninian's ; the man stopped her, thinking she was a strayed animal, and that some one would claim her. She tried several times to break through by force when he opened the gate, but he always prevented her, and at length she turned patiently

back. She had found some means of eluding him, however, for home she came on a Sabbath morning, early in June ; and she left the farm of Lochs, in Glen-Lyon, either on the Thursday afternoon, or Friday morning, a week and two days before. The farmer of Harehope paid the Highland farmer the price of her, and she remained on her native farm till she died of old age, in her seventeenth year.

“ With regard to the natural affection of this animal, the instances that might be mentioned are without number. When one loses its sight in a flock of Sheep, it is rarely abandoned to itself in that hapless and helpless state. Some one always attaches itself to it, and by bleating calls it back from the precipice, the lake, the pool, and all dangers whatever. There is a disease among Sheep, called by shepherds the Breakshugh, a deadly sort of dysentery, which is as infectious as fire in a flock. Whenever a Sheep feels itself seized by this, it instantly withdraws from all the rest,

shunning their society with the greatest care; it even hides itself, and is often very hard to be found. Though this propensity can hardly be attributed to natural instinct, it is, at all events, a provision of nature of the greatest kindness and beneficence.

“ Another manifest provision of nature with regard to these animals is, that the more inhospitable the land is on which they feed, the greater their kindness and attention to their young. I once herded two years on a wild and bare farm called Willenslee, on the border of Mid-Lothian, and of all the Sheep I ever saw, these were the kindest and most affectionate to their lambs. I was often deeply affected at scenes which I witnessed. We had one very severe winter, so that our Sheep grew lean in the spring, and the thwarter-ill, a sort of paralytic affection, came among them, and carried off a number. Often have I seen these poor victims, when fallen down to rise no more, even when unable to lift their heads from

the ground, holding up the leg, to invite the starving lamb to the miserable pittance that the udder could still supply. I had never seen aught more painfully affecting.

"It is well known that it is a custom with shepherds when a lamb dies, if the mother have a sufficiency of milk, to bring her from the hill, and put another lamb to her. This is done by putting the skin of the dead lamb upon the living one; the Ewe immediately acknowledges the relationship, and after the skin has warmed on it, so as to give it something of the smell of her own progeny, and it has sucked her two or three times, she accepts and nourishes it as her own ever after. Whether it is from joy at this apparent reanimation of her young one, or because a little doubt remains on her mind which she would fain dispel, I cannot decide, but for a number of days, she shows far more fondness, by bleating and caressing over this one, than she did formerly over the one that was really her own. But this

is not what I wanted to explain; it was, that such Sheep as thus lose their lambs must be driven to a house with dogs, so that the lamb may be put to them; for they will not suffer it to approach, but in a dark confined place. But at Willenslee, I never needed to drive home a sheep by force, with dogs, or in any other way than the following: I found every Ewe, of course, standing hanging her head over her dead lamb; and having a piece of twine with me for the purpose, I tied that to the lamb's neck or foot, and trailing it along, the Ewe followed me into any house or fold that I chose to lead her. Any of them would have followed me in that way for miles, with her nose close on the lamb, which she never quitted for a moment, except to chase my dog, which she would not suffer to walk near me. I often, out of curiosity, led them in to the side of the kitchen-fire by this means, into the midst of servants and dogs; but the more that dangers multiplied around the Ewe, she

clung the closer to her dead offspring, and thought of nothing whatever but protecting it. One of the two years, while I remained on this farm, a severe blast of snow came on by night, about the latter end of April, which destroyed several scores of our lambs; and as we had not enough of twins and odd lambs for the mothers that had lost theirs, of course we selected the best Ewes, and put lambs to them. As we were making the distribution, I requested of my master to spare me a lamb for a hawked Ewe which he knew, and which was standing over a dead lamb in the head of the Hope, about four miles from the house. He would not do it, but bid me let her remain for a day or two, and perhaps a twin would be forthcoming. I did so, and faithfully she did stand to her charge; so faithfully, that I think the like never was equalled by any of the woolly race. I visited her every morning and evening, and for the first eight days never found her above two or three yards

from the lamb; and always, as I went my rounds, she eyed me long ere I came near her, and kept tramping with her feet, and whistling through her nose, to frighten away the dog; he got a regular chase twice a day as I passed by: but, however excited and fierce a Ewe may be, she never offers any resistance to mankind, being perfectly and meekly passive to them. The weather grew fine and warm, and the dead lamb soon decayed, which the body of a dead lamb does particularly soon: but still this affectionate and desolate creature kept hanging over the poor remains with an attachment that seemed to be nourished by hopelessness. It often drew the tears from my eyes to see her hanging with such fondness over a few bones, mixed with a small portion of wool. For the first fortnight she never quitted the spot, and for another week she visited it every morning and evening, uttering a few kindly and heart-piercing bleats each time; till at length every remnant of her

offspring vanished, mixing with the soil, or wafted away by the winds."

"Poor creature! Uncle Thomas, that was very affecting."

"So much for the Ettrick Shepherd's stories. I will now tell you of a remarkable instance of sagacity in a Roebuck, which is mentioned in Monk Lewis's correspondence—Here it is:—One of the farm-keeper's wives going homewards through the wood, saw a Roebuck running towards her with great speed. Thinking it was going to attack her with its horns, she was considerably alarmed; but, at the distance of a few paces, the animal stopped and disappeared among the bushes. The woman recovered herself, and was proceeding on her way, when the Roebuck appeared again, ran towards her as before, and again retreated without doing her any harm. On this being done a third time, the woman was induced to follow it till it led her to the side of a deep ditch, in which she discovered a young Roebuck

unable to extricate itself, and on the point of being drowned. The woman immediately tried to rescue it, during which the other Roebuck stood by quietly, and, as soon as her exertions were successful, the two animals galloped off together.

“Though it differs in many respects from the Sheep, the Goat bears so strong a resemblance to that animal, that now that I am speaking of it, I may as well tell you a story or two about the Goat. It will save my returning to it afterwards.”

“Very well, Uncle Thomas.”

“The Goat is in every respect more fitted for a life of savage liberty than the Sheep. It is of a more lively disposition, and is possessed of a greater degree of intelligence. It readily attaches itself to man, and seems sensible of his caresses. It delights in climbing rocky precipices, and going to the very edge of danger. Nature has admirably fitted it for traversing such places with ease; its hoof is

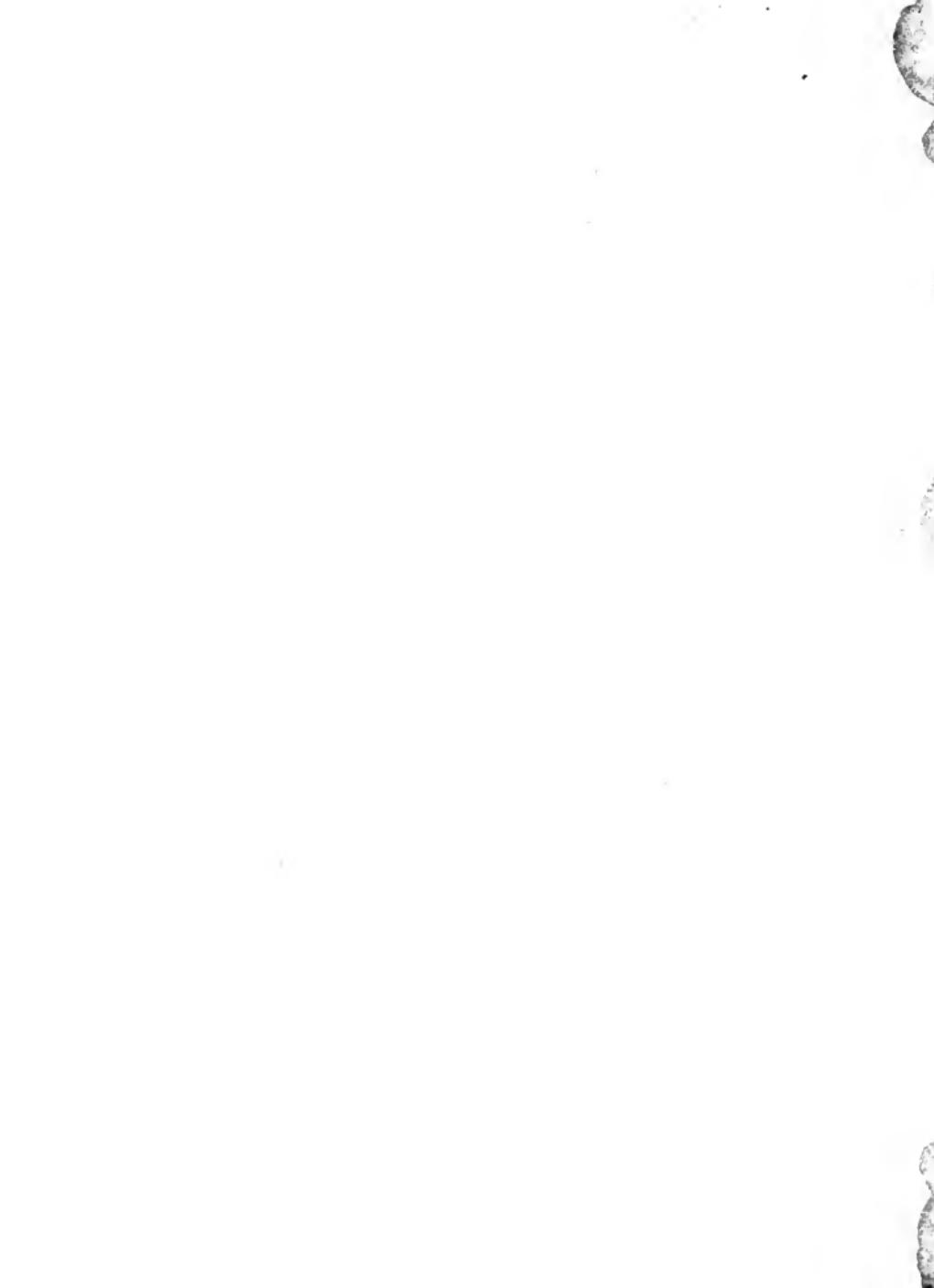
hollow underneath, with sharp edges, so that it walks as securely on the ridge of a house as on the level ground.

“The celebrated traveller Dr. Clarke gives a very curious account of a Goat, which was trained to exhibit various amusing feats of dexterity.

“‘We met,’ says he, ‘an Arab with a Goat which he led about the country to exhibit, in order to gain a livelihood for itself and its owner. He had taught this animal, while he accompanied its movements with a song, to mount upon little cylindrical blocks of wood, placed successively one above another, and in shape resembling the dice-box belonging to a backgammon table. In this manner the Goat stood, first on the top of one cylinder, then on the top of two; afterwards, of three, four, five, and six, until it remained balanced upon the summit of them all, elevated several feet above the ground, and, with its four feet collected upon a single point, without throwing down the disjointed fabric on which it stood.



"The animal remained balanced on the summit, without throwing down the disjointed fabric."



The diameter of the upper cylinder, on which its four feet alternately remained until the Arab had ended his ditty, was only two inches, and the length of each six inches. The most curious part of the performance occurred afterwards ; for the Arab, to convince us of the animal's attention to the turn of the air, occasionally interrupted it ; and, as often as he did this, the Goat tottered, appeared uneasy, and upon his becoming suddenly silent, in the middle of his song, it fell to the ground.' "

" Like the Sheep, the Goat possesses great natural affection for its young. In its defence it boldly repels the attacks of the most formidable opponents. I remember a little story which finely illustrates this instinctive courage :—

" A gentleman, having missed one of his Goats when his flock was taken home at night, being afraid the wanderer would get among and destroy the young trees in the nursery, two boys, wrapt in their plaids, were appointed to

keep watch all night. When the morning dawned, they set out in search of her. They at length discovered her on a pointed rock at a considerable distance, and hastening to the spot perceived her standing over her kid with the greatest anxiety, defending it from a Fox. Reynard turned round and round to lay hold of his prey, but the Goat presented her horns in every direction. The youngest boy was despatched for assistance to attack the Fox, and the eldest by hallooing and throwing stones, sought to intimidate it as he advanced to the rescue. The Fox seemed well aware that the child could not execute his threats; he looked at him one instant, and then renewed the assault, till, quite impatient, he made a sudden spring at the kid. The whole three animals then suddenly disappeared, and were found at the bottom of the precipice. The Goat's horns were darted into the back of the Fox; and the kid lay stretched beside them. It is supposed that the Fox had fixed his teeth

in the kid, for its neck was lacerated ; but the blow by which the faithful mother had inflicted the death wound upon her mortal enemy had been struck with so much determination, that she had lost her balance, and the whole three were thus precipitated over the rock.

“ There is another story of the Goat, which places its gratitude and affection in such an interesting light, that I am sure it will delight you :—

“ After the final suppression of the Scottish Rebellion of 1715 by the decisive Battle of Preston, a gentleman who had taken a very active share in it escaped to the West Highlands, to the residence of a female relative who afforded him an asylum. As in consequence of the strict search which was made after the ringleaders, it was soon judged unsafe for him to remain in the house of his friend, he was conducted to a cavern in a sequestered situation, and furnished with a supply of food. The approach to this lonely abode consisted of a small aperture, through which he crept, dragging his

provisions along with him. A little way from the mouth of the cave the roof became elevated, but, on advancing, an obstacle obstructed his progress. He soon perceived that, whatever it might be, the object was a living one, but, suspicious of danger though he was, he felt unwilling to strike at a venture with his dirk, but stooped down, and discovered a goat and her kid lying on the ground. The animal was evidently in great pain, and on passing his hand over her body, he discovered that one of her legs was fractured. He accordingly bound it up with his garter, and offered her some of his bread; but she refused to eat, and stretched out her tongue, as if intimating that her mouth was parched with thirst. He gave her water, which she drank greedily, and then she ate the bread. At midnight he ventured from the cave, pulled a quantity of grass and the tender branches of trees, and carried them to the poor sufferer, which received them with demonstrations of gratitude.

“ The only thing which the fugitive had to occupy his attention in his dreary abode was administering comfort to the Goat; and secluded and solitary as he was, he was thankful to have any living creature beside him. Under his care the animal quickly recovered, and became tenderly attached to him. It happened that the servant who was intrusted with the secret of his retreat fell sick, when it became necessary to send another with the daily provision. The goat, on this occasion happening to be lying near the mouth of the cavern, violently opposed the entrance of the stranger, butting him furiously with her head. The fugitive, hearing the noise, advanced, and receiving the watchword from his new attendant, interposed, and the faithful Goat permitted him to pass. So resolute was the animal on this occasion, that the gentleman was convinced she would have died in his defence.”

“ That was noble, Uncle Thomas !”

CHAPTER V.

UNCLE THOMAS RELATES SOME VERY REMARKABLE STORIES ABOUT THE CAT; POINTS OUT TO THE BOYS THE CONNECTION SUBSISTING BETWEEN THE DOMESTIC CAT AND THE LION AND TIGER, AND TELLS THEM SOME STORIES ABOUT THE GENTLENESS, AS WELL AS THE FEROCITY OF THOSE ANIMALS.

"THOUGH far from being so general a favourite as the Dog, the domestic Cat has many qualities to recommend it to our regard, and some of the stories which I am going to tell you exhibit instances of gentleness and affection which cannot be surpassed.

"I dare say, Frank, you recollect the circumstance of the Duke of Norfolk's cat seeking to share his imprisonment by getting down the chimney of his room when he was confined in the tower, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Here, however, is an in-

stance of still stronger attachment to its master, which will match indeed with the best of those of the Dog:—

“ A Cat which had been brought up in a family became extremely attached to the eldest child, a little boy, who was very fond of playing with her. She bore with the most exemplary patience any little maltreatment which she received from him—which even good-natured children seldom fail, occasionally, to give to animals in their sports with them—without ever making any attempt at resistance. Whenever she caught a mouse, she brought it alive to her friend, if he showed any desire to take her prey from her, she would suffer it to escape, and waited to see whether he was able to catch it. If he did not, the Cat darted at, seized it, and laid it again before him; and in this manner the sport continued as long as the child showed any inclination for the amusement.

“ It happened that the boy was attacked by

small-pox, and, during the early stages of the disease the Cat never quitted his bed-side ; but, as the danger increased, it was found necessary to remove the Cat and lock her up. At length the child died. On the following day the Cat having escaped from her confinement, immediately ran to the apartment where she hoped to find her play-mate. Disappointed in her expectation, she sought for him with symptoms of great uneasiness and loud lamentations, all over the house, till she came to the door of the room in which the corpse lay. Here she lay down in silent melancholy, till she was again locked up. As soon as the child was interred, the Cat was set at liberty ; she soon disappeared, and it was not till nearly a fortnight had elapsed, that she returned to the well-known apartment, quite emaciated. She refused, however to take any food, and soon again escaped with dismal cries. At length, compelled by hunger, she made her appearance daily at dinner-time, but always left the house as soon



"So indelible was her attachment, that for years she never passed the night anywhere else than close to his grave."

as she had eaten the portion of food assigned to her. No one knew where she spent the rest of the time, till she was one day discovered under the wall of the burying-ground, close to the grave of her favourite; and so indelible was her attachment to her deceased friend, that till his parents removed to another place, five years afterwards, she never, except in the greatest severity of winter, passed the night any where else than close to the grave. It was somewhat curious, that although she suffered herself to be played with by the other children, she never exhibited a particular partiality for any of them."

"Poor Puss! It certainly was a most affectionate creature, Uncle Thomas!"

"There is another story of the Cat's attachment, Boys, which I lately saw recorded in a provincial newspaper. It serves to illustrate the unexplained—I had almost said unexplainable—instinct which carries animals from one place to another, although they may never

have been that way before. A short time ago, a family removed from the metropolis of Scotland to another town, at the distance of upwards of thirty miles, to reach which it is necessary to cross an arm of the sea, several miles in breadth, or to make a circuit of about twenty miles. They had a favourite Cat, which, previous to their removal, alarmed perhaps by the unwonted bustle, hid itself, and no stratagem could induce it to leave its place of concealment. They of course gave her up for lost. It happened, however, that one morning after they had been settled for several weeks in their new abode their attention was attracted by a violent scratching at the door: on opening it, greatly to their astonishment in walked their favourite Cat, of which, from the time of their removal they had heard nothing. How she had found out the way, whether she had crossed the sea or avoided it by making the long circuit of which I told you, it was of course impossible to tell, but it certainly is one of

the most remarkable instances of the kind on record."

" It is a most mysterious affair, Uncle Thomas!"

" It is so, Harry, but the instance is not a solitary one. The same thing happened with the favourite Cat of a nobleman, which, on being removed to his country seat more than a hundred miles from London, found her way back to his house in town.

" I recollect, Boys, how highly pleased you were with the story which I told you about the Dog discovering the murderers of his master. There is one of a very similar description of a French Cat which I am sure will also interest you:—

" In the beginning of the present century a woman was murdered in Paris. The magistrate who went to investigate the affair was accompanied by a physician; they found the body lying upon the floor. Upon a chest in a corner of the room sat a Cat, motionless, with

its eyes stedfastly fixed upon the body of its murdered mistress. Many persons, drawn by curiosity, now entered the apartment, but neither the appearance of such a crowd of strangers, nor the confusion that prevailed in the place, could make the Cat change her position. In the mean time, several persons were apprehended on suspicion of being concerned in the murder, and it was resolved to lead them into the apartment. Before the Cat saw them, when she only heard their footsteps approaching, her eyes flashed with increased fury, her hair stood erect, and as soon as they entered the apartment, she sprang towards them with expressions of the most violent rage, but did not venture to attack them, being probably alarmed by the crowd that followed. After turning several times towards them with a peculiar ferocity of aspect, she crept into a corner, with an air indicative of the deepest melancholy. This extraordinary behaviour of the Cat astonished every one present, nor was

this feeling confined to the spectators alone. The effect which it produced upon the murderers was such as almost to amount to an acknowledgment of their guilt. Nor did the matter remain long doubtful, for a train of accessory circumstances was soon discovered which proved it to complete conviction.

“ This, however, is not the only instance of fidelity in a Cat. A man who was sentenced to transportation for house-breaking confessed, after his conviction, that he committed the robbery along with two companions, and, that while they were in the act of plundering the house, a large black Cat flew at one of them, and fixed her claws on each side of his face, to his no small astonishment and dismay.

“ I have often, Boys, warned you against stories of ghosts and hobgoblins, and shown you on how frail a foundation they generally rest. Here is a story in which a Cat was one of the principal actors, which contains the elements of as marvellous a tale of this de-

scription as could be desired. It happened in the west of Scotland:—

“ Some years ago, a poor man, whose habits of life had always been of the most retired description, giving way to the natural despondency of his disposition, put an end to his existence. The only other inmate of his cottage was a favourite Cat. When the deed was discovered, the Cat was found assiduously watching over her master’s body, and it was with some difficulty she could be driven away.

“ The appalling deed naturally excited a great deal of attention in the surrounding neighbourhood, and on the day after the body was deposited in the grave, which was made at the outside of the church-yard, a number of school-boys ventured thither, to view the resting place of one who had at all times been the subject of village wonder, and whose recent act of self-destruction had invested with additional interest. At first no one was brave

enough to venture near; until the appearance of a hole in the side of the grave irresistibly attracted their attention. It was at length determined that it must have been the work of some bodysnatcher, and the story having spread, the grave was minutely examined; but the coffin was found undisturbed; the turf was replaced, and the grave again carefully covered up.

“ On the following morning it was discovered that the turf was again removed, and a hole, deeper than before, yawned in the side of the sad receptacle. The villagers crowded to the spot, speculation was soon busy at work, and all sorts of explanations were suggested. In the midst of their contentions, alarmed perhaps by the noise of the disputants, puss darted from the hole, much to the confusion of some of the most noisy and dogmatic expounders of the mystery. Again the turf was replaced, and again and again was it removed by the unceasing efforts of the faithful cat to share the

resting place of her deceased master. It was at last found necessary to shoot her, it being found impossible to prevent her returning to the spot and disturbing the grave."

"Poor puss! I wonder no one tried to gain its affections, and thus charm it from its dreary abode, Uncle Thomas. Did you ever hear Dr. Good's account of a very extraordinary instance of sagacity in his cat? I was very much struck with it when I saw it a day or two ago in his 'Book of Nature.' If you please, I will read it to you."

"Very well, Harry, I shall be glad to hear it; I dare say it is an old acquaintance of mine, however; I have been such a diligent searcher after stories of this description, that I think very few have escaped me."

"Here it is, Uncle Thomas:—'A favourite Cat, that was accustomed from day to day to take her station quietly at my elbow, on the writing table, sometimes for hour after hour, whilst I was engaged in study, became at length less

constant in her attendance, as she had a kitten to take care of. One morning she placed herself in the same spot, but seemed unquiet, and, instead of seating herself as usual, continued to rub her furry sides against my hand and pen, as though resolved to draw my attention, and make me leave off. As soon as she had accomplished this point, she leaped down on the carpet, and made towards the door, with a look of great uneasiness. I opened the door for her, as she seemed to desire, but, instead of going forward, she turned round, and looked earnestly at me, as though she wished me to follow her, or had something to communicate. I did not fully understand her meaning, and, being much engaged at the time, shut the door upon her, that she might go where she liked.

“ In less than an hour afterwards, however, she had again found an entrance into the room, and drawn close to me, but, instead of mounting the table, and rubbing herself against my

hand, as before, she was now under the table, and continued to rub herself against my feet, on moving which I struck them against something, and on looking down, beheld with equal grief and astonishment, covered over with cinder dust, the dead body of her little kitten which I supposed had been alive and in good health. I now entered into the entire train of this afflicted Cat's feelings. She had suddenly lost the nursling she doated on, and was resolved to make me acquainted with it,—assuredly that I might know her grief, and probably also that I might inquire into the cause, and, finding me too dull to understand her expressive motioning that I would follow her to the cinder heap on which the dead kitten had been thrown, she took the great labour of bringing it to me herself, from the area on the basement floor, and up a whole flight of stairs, and laid it at my feet. I took up the kitten in my hand, the cat still following me, made inquiry into the cause of its death, which I

found, upon summoning the servants, to have been an accident, in which no one was much to blame; and the yearning mother having thus obtained her object, and got her master to enter into her cause, and divide her sorrows with her, gradually took comfort, and resumed her former station by my side.””

“ Thank you, Harry, I do not think I ever heard that story before. Here is one that will match it however, displaying considerable ingenuity in a Cat in the protection of her young.

“ A Cat belonging to an Innkeeper in Cornwall, having been removed to a barn at some distance from home, soon afterwards produced four kittens. Not wishing the stock increased, the Innkeeper desired three of them to be drowned, next morning, before opening their eyes on the world. Puss was deeply affected by this bereavement, and resolved on removing her remaining offspring to a place of security. When the person appointed to feed grimalkin

went with her breakfast on the following day, no traces of her or her kitten were to be found. He called; but all was silent as the tomb; every corner was searched in vain; no Cat was forthcoming. At length, after the lapse of several days, puss made her appearance early one morning in the court of her master's house, a melancholy picture of starvation. Having satisfied her hunger, and loitered about the house during the day, she took her departure, late in the evening, carrying away some meat. For some time she continued her visits in the same manner, taking care never to leave home empty-mouthed at night. Her proceedings having excited curiosity, she was watched by two men, in one of her nocturnal visits, and traced to the top of a wheat-stack, at some distance. On obtaining a ladder, her surviving kitten was found, in a curiously constructed hole, sleek and plump, but as wild as a young Tiger, and would allow no one to touch it. A few days afterwards, the mother finding, perhaps, that her

own daily journeys were rather fatiguing, or thinking it was time that the object of her solicitude should be introduced into the world, and that the kitten had attained an age when it could protect itself, took advantage of a dark and silent night, to convey it safely home, where both found a welcome reception.

“ I have frequently told you stories about the friendship of animals. Here is an instance of this feeling between a Cat and Dog, which from bad education are generally the most determined enemies. It is related by a French writer on the Language of Brutes :—

“ I had a Cat and Dog, which became so attached to each other that they would never willingly be asunder. Whenever the Dog got any choice morsel of food he was sure to divide it with his whiskered friend. They always ate sociably out of one plate, slept in the same bed, and daily walked out together. Wishing to put this apparently sincere friend-

ship to the proof, I one day took the Cat by herself into my room, while I had the Dog guarded in another apartment. I entertained the Cat in a most sumptuous manner, being desirous to see what sort of a meal she would make without her friend, who had hitherto been her constant table companion. The Cat enjoyed the treat with great glee, and seemed to have entirely forgotten the Dog. I had had a partridge for dinner, half of which I intended to keep for supper. My wife covered it with a plate, and put it into a cupboard, the door of which she did not lock. The Cat left the room, and I walked out upon business. My wife, meanwhile, sat at work in an adjoining apartment. When I returned home, she related to me the following circumstances:—The Cat, having hastily left the dining room, went to the Dog, and mewed uncommonly loud, and in different tones of voice; which the Dog, from time to time, answered with a short bark. They then went both to the door of the room

where the Cat had dined, and waited till it was opened. One of my children opened the door, and immediately the two friends entered the apartment. The mewing of the cat excited my wife's attention. She rose from her seat, and stepped softly up to the door, which stood ajar, to observe what was going on. The Cat led the Dog to the cupboard which contained the partridge, pushed off the plate which covered it, and taking out my intended supper, laid it before her canine friend, who devoured it greedily. Probably the Cat, by her mewing, had given the Dog to understand what an excellent meal she had made, and how sorry she was that he had not participated in it; but, at the same time, had explained to him that something was left for him in the cupboard, and persuaded him to follow her thither. Since that time I have paid particular attention to these animals, and am convinced that they communicate to each other whatever seems interesting."

"Oh! indeed, Uncle Thomas, do you think that animals talk to each other?"

"I have no doubt that to some extent they have the power of communicating their ideas to each other, Harry, but I cannot go the whole length of Monsieur Wenzel, who records the story which I have just told you.

"I will now, Boys, tell you some stories about the other animals of the Cat kind, such as the Lion, Tiger, &c. Though these animals differ so much from the domestic Cat, they all belong to the same family; the huge Lion, which carries off with ease a buffalo from the herd, or makes the forest tremble with his hoarse roar, is only an enormous Cat.

"I dare say you have all heard the story of 'Androcles and the Lion,' which is recorded in that most delightful book, 'Sandford and Merton.' It is so captivating a tale, that I must relate it to you as much for my own gratification as for yours. I will just observe, however, that it is a fiction, and not a real

narrative, though I can tell you one or two very similar ones, which occurred in real life. Here it is, John, have the kindness to read it to us."

" With great pleasure, Uncle Thomas:— There was a certain slave, named Androcles, who was so ill treated by his master, that his life became insupportable. Finding no remedy from what he suffered, he at length said to himself:—‘ It is better to die than to continue to live in such hardships and misery as I am obliged to suffer. I am determined therefore to run away from my master; if I am taken again, I know that I shall be punished with a cruel death, but it is better to die at once than to live in misery. If I escape, I must betake myself to deserts and woods, inhabited only by wild beasts, but they cannot use me more cruelly than I have been by my fellow creatures, therefore I will rather trust myself to them than continue to be a miserable slave.

"Having formed this resolution, he took an opportunity of leaving his master's house, and hid himself in a thick forest, which was some miles distant from the city. But here the unhappy man found that he had only escaped from one kind of misery to experience another. He wandered about all day through a vast and trackless wood, where his flesh was continually torn by thorns and brambles. He grew hungry, but he could find no food in this dreary solitude. At length he was ready to die with fatigue, and lay down in despair in a large cavern.

"The unfortunate man had not been long quiet in the cavern, before he heard a dreadful noise, which seemed to be the roar of some wild beast, and terrified him very much. He started up with a design to escape, and had already reached the mouth of the cave, when he saw coming towards him a lion of prodigious size, which prevented any possibility of retreat. He now believed his destruction to be inevitable, but to his great astonishment the beast advanced





"He then perceived that a thorn of uncommon size had penetrated the ball of the foot."

towards him with a gentle pace, without any mark of enmity or rage, and uttered a kind of mournful noise, as if he demanded the assistance of the man.

“ Androcles, who was naturally of a resolute disposition, acquired courage from this circumstance to examine his monstrous guest, who gave him sufficient leisure for this purpose. He saw, as the Lion approached him, that he seemed to limp upon one of his legs, and that the foot was extremely swelled, as if it had been wounded. Acquiring still more fortitude from the gentle demeanour of the beast, he advanced towards him, and took hold of the wounded part as a surgeon would examine his patient. He then perceived that a thorn of uncommon size had penetrated the ball of the foot, and was the occasion of the swelling and the lameness which he had observed. Androcles found that the beast, far from resenting his familiarity, received it with the greatest gentleness, and seemed to invite him by his

blandishments to proceed. He therefore extracted the thorn, and, pressing the swelling, discharged a considerable quantity of matter, which had been the cause of so much pain. As soon as the beast felt himself thus relieved, he began to testify his joy and gratitude by every expression in his power. He jumped about like a wanton spaniel, wagged his enormous tail, and licked the feet and hands of his physician. Nor was he contented with these demonstrations of kindness. From this moment Androcles became his guest; nor did the Lion ever sally forth in quest of his prey, without bringing home the produce of his chase, and sharing it with his friend.

“ In this savage state of hospitality did the man continue to live during several months. At length wandering unguardedly through the woods, he met with a company of soldiers sent out to apprehend him, and was by them taken prisoner, and conducted back to his master. The laws of that country being very severe

against slaves, he was tried and found guilty of having fled from his master, and, as a punishment for his pretended crime, he was sentenced to be torn in pieces by a furious Lion, kept many days without food, to inspire him with additional rage.

“ When the destined moment arrived, the unhappy man was exposed, unarmed, in the middle of a spacious arena, inclosed on every side, round which many thousand people were assembled to view the mournful spectacle. Presently a dreadful yell was heard, which struck the spectators with horror, and a monstrous Lion rushed out of a den, which was purposely set open, with erected mane and flaming eyes, and jaws that gaped like an open sepulchre. A mournful silence instantly prevailed. All eyes were turned upon the destined victim, whose destruction seemed inevitable. But the pity of the multitude was soon converted into astonishment when they beheld the Lion, instead of destroying its defenceless enemy, crouch submis-

sively at his feet, fawn upon him as a faithful dog would do upon his master, and rejoice over him as a mother that unexpectedly recovers her offspring. The governor of the town, who was present, then called out with a loud voice, and ordered Androcles to explain to them this unintelligible mystery, and how a savage of the fiercest and most unpitying nature should thus in a moment have forgotten his innate disposition, and be converted into a harmless and inoffensive animal. Androcles then related to the assembly every circumstance of his adventures, and concluded by saying, that the very Lion which now stood before them had been his friend and entertainer in the woods. All present were astonished and delighted with the story, to find that even the fiercest beasts are capable of being softened by gratitude; and, being moved by humanity, they unanimously joined to entreat for the pardon of the unhappy man, from the governor of the place. This was

immediately granted to him, and he was also presented with the Lion, which had twice saved the life of Androcles."

"That is a delightful story, Uncle Thomas! What a pity it is that it is not true."

"I can tell you one which is true, John, which is hardly, if at all, inferior in interest:—

"Sir George Davis, who was English consul at Naples about the middle of the seventeenth century, happening on one occasion to be in Florence, visited the Menagerie of the Grand Duke. At the farther end of one of the dens he saw a Lion, which lay in sullen majesty, and which the keepers informed him they had been unable to tame, although every effort had been used for upwards of three years. Sir George had no sooner reached the gate of the den, than the Lion ran to it, and evinced every demonstration of joy and transport. The animal reared himself up, purred like a cat when pleased, and licked the hand of Sir George, which he had put through the bars. The keeper was astonished,

and, alarmed for the safety of his visitor, entreated him not to trust an apparent fit of frenzy, with which the animal seemed to be seized; for it was without exception, the most fierce and sullen of his tribe which he had ever seen. Undismayed, however, Sir George, notwithstanding every entreaty on the part of the keeper, insisted on entering the Lion's den. The moment he got in, the delighted Lion threw its paws upon his shoulders, licked his face, and ran about him, rubbing its head on Sir George, purring and fawning like a cat when expressing its affection for its master. Such a singular occurrence soon became the town talk of Florence, and reached the ears of the Grand Duke, who sent for Sir George, and requested an interview at the menagerie, that he might witness so extraordinary a circumstance. After having satisfied the curiosity of the Grand Duke, Sir George gave the following explanation: 'A captain of a ship from Barbary gave me this Lion, when quite a whelp. I brought him up

tame ; but when I thought him too large to be suffered to run about the house, I built a den for him in my court-yard. From that time he was never permitted to be loose, except when brought to the house to be exhibited to my friends. When he was about five years old, he committed some mischief when pawing and playing with people in his frolicsome moods. Having gripped a man one day a little too hard, I ordered him to be shot, for fear of myself incurring the guilt of what might happen. A friend, who happened to be at dinner with me when the order was given, begged him as a present. How he came here I know not.' On hearing Sir George's explanation, the Grand Duke told him that he also had received the Lion as a present from the person to whom he had given it."

" I should have been terribly afraid to have ventured into the Lion's den, Uncle Thomas !"

" I dare say you would, John, and so should I. But some stories are recorded of the gentleness of the Lion, as well almost to justify such

acts of what would otherwise appear foolhardiness: Here is one:—

“ Part of a ship’s crew being sent ashore on the coast of India for the purpose of cutting wood, the curiosity of one of the men having led him to stray to a considerable distance from his companions, he was much alarmed by the appearance of a huge Lioness, who made towards him; but, on her coming up, his fear was allayed by her crouching at his feet, and looking very earnestly, first in his face and then at a tree some little distance off. After repeating this several times she rose, and proceeded towards the tree, looking back, as if asking the sailor to follow. At length he ventured to advance, and, coming to the tree, perceived perched among its highest branches a huge Baboon, with two young cubs in its arms, which he immediately concluded were those of the Lioness, as she crouched down like a cat, and seemed to eye them very wistfully. The man being afraid to ascend the tree, decided on

cutting it down, and, having his axe with him, he set actively to work, the Lioness all the while watching his operations with the greatest anxiety. When the tree fell, she pounced upon the baboon, and, after tearing it in pieces, turned round, and caressed her cubs for some time. She then returned to the sailor, and tried to express her gratitude by fawning on him, rubbing her head fondly against him; then taking up her cubs in her mouth, she carried them away one by one, and the sailor rejoined his companions, much pleased with the adventure.

“ Another author tells such a graphic story of a Lion entertaining a hunter, that I must let you hear it also, Boys, though I must say that I think he has rather overstrained it:—

“ A hunter on one occasion having gone in search of the Lion, and having penetrated a considerable distance into a forest, discovered in their place of concealment two young Lion-whelps. He stopped for some time amusing

himself with the little animals, and, waiting for the coming of the sire or the dam, took out his breakfast, and gave them a part. It happened that the Lioness arrived, unperceived by the sportsman, so that he had not time, or perhaps wanted the courage, to take his gun. She waited for some time looking at the man who was thus feasting her young, and then retreated into the forest, but soon returned, bearing with her a sheep, which she came and laid at his feet. The hunter, thus made as it were one of the family, took occasion to make a good meal,—skinned the sheep, lighted a fire, and roasted a part, giving the entrails to the young. The Lion, in his turn, came also; and, as if respecting the rights of hospitality, showed no tokens whatever of ferocity. On the following day the hunter took his leave and returned home, after having come to a resolution never more to kill any of these animals, whose noble generosity he had so fully experienced. He stroked and caressed the whelps at taking leave of them,

and both the dam and sire accompanied him till he was safely out of the forest!"

" Well, Uncle Thomas, I cannot believe that story. I think the man would have been too glad to escape to have staid so long with such unsafe companions."

" You are quite right, Harry. I cannot expect that you should give credit to a story which I myself disbelieve. Here is one about the ferocity of the Lion which is, however, beyond all doubt:—

" In the year 1816 the horses which were dragging the Exeter mail-coach were attacked in the most furious manner by a Lioness, which had escaped from a travelling menagerie.

" At the moment when the coachman pulled up, to deliver his bags at one of the stages a few miles from the town of Salisbury, one of the leading horses was suddenly seized by a ferocious animal. This of course produced great confusion and alarm. Two passengers, who were inside the coach, got out and ran into the house.

The horse kicked and plunged violently ; and it was with difficulty the driver could prevent the vehicle from being overturned. The light of the lamps soon enabled the guard to discover that the animal which had seized the horse was a huge Lioness. A large mastiff came up and attacked her fiercely, on which she quitted the horse and turned upon him. The dog fled, but was pursued and killed by the Lioness, before it had run forty yards from the place. It appeared that the ferocious animal had escaped from a menagerie, on its way to Salisbury fair. The alarm being given, the keepers pursued and hunted the Lioness, carrying the dog in her teeth, into a hovel under a granary, which served for keeping agricultural implements. They soon secured her effectually, by barricading the place, so as to prevent her escape. The horse, when first attacked, fought with great spirit ; and, if he had been at liberty, would probably have beaten down his antagonist with his fore feet ; but in plunging he entangled himself in the

harness. The Lioness, it appears, attacked him in front, and, springing at his throat, had fastened the talons of her fore feet on each side of his gullet, close to the head, while those of her hind feet were forced into his chest. In this situation she hung, while the blood streamed from the wounds as if a vein had been opened by a lancet. The horse was so dreadfully torn, that he was not at first expected to survive. The expressions of agony, in his tears and moans, were most piteous and affecting. For a considerable time after the Lioness had entered the hovel, she continued roaring in a dreadful manner, so loud, indeed, that she was distinctly heard at the distance of half a mile. She was eventually secured and led back in triumph to her cell."

" It was very fortunate that it did not attack the passengers, Uncle Thomas!"

" Very much so, indeed, Frank; it might have turned out a very serious affair."

CHAPTER VI.

UNCLE THOMAS TELLS ABOUT THE TIGER, AND OF THE CURIOUS MODES WHICH ARE ADOPTED FOR ITS CAPTURE AND DESTRUCTION; ALSO ABOUT THE PUMA OR AMERICAN LION, AND INTRODUCES SOME HUNTING SCENES IN NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA, WITH OTHER INTERESTING AND ENTERTAINING ADVENTURES.

“ LONG as the stories were, Boys, which I told you last night about the Lion, I have not yet quite done with the animals of the Cat kind ; there are still one or two stories about the Tiger, and the Puma, or American Lion, which I wish to tell you of, if you do not think we have already had enough of them.”

“ Oh, no, Uncle Thomas, pray do go on.”

“ Very well, I will first tell you about the Tiger.

“ The Tiger which inhabits the rich jungles of India nearly equals the Lion in strength, and perhaps excels him in fierceness and activity.

A very affecting instance of his ferocity, by which a fine young man, the only son of Sir Hector Munro, lost his life, is thus related by one of the party:—

“ Yesterday morning, Captain George Downey, Lieutenant Pyefinch, poor Mr. Munro (of the Honourable East India Company’s service), and myself (Captain Consar), went on shore, on Saugur Island, to shoot deer. We saw innumerable tracks of Tigers and deer; but still we were induced to pursue our sport; and did so the whole day. About half past three we sat down on the edge of the jungle, to eat some cold meat sent to us from the ship, and had just commenced our meal, when Mr. Pyefinch and a black servant told us there was a fine deer within six yards of us. Captain Downey and I immediately jumped up, to take our guns; mine was nearest, and I had but just laid hold of it, when I heard a roar like thunder, and saw an immense royal Tiger spring on the unfortunate Munro, who was sitting down; in a

moment his head was in the beast's mouth, and he rushed into the jungle with him, with as much ease as I could lift a kitten, tearing him through the thickest bushes and trees, every thing yielding to his monstrous strength. The agonies of horror, regret, and, I must say, fear (for there were two Tigers), rushed on me at once; the only effort I could make was to fire at him, though the poor youth was still in his mouth. I relied partly on Providence, partly on my own aim, and fired a musket. The Tiger staggered, and seemed agitated, which I took notice of to my companions. Captain Downey then fired two shots, and I one more. We retired from the jungle, and, a few minutes after, Mr. Munro came up to us all over blood, and fell. We took him on our backs to the boat, and got every medical assistance for him from the Valentine Indiaman, which lay at anchor near the island, but in vain. He lived twenty-four hours in the utmost torture; his head and skull were all torn and broken to

pieces, and he was also wounded, by the animal's claws, all over his neck and shoulders ; but it was better to take him away, though irrecoverable, than leave him to be mangled and devoured. We have just read the funeral service over his body, and committed it to the deep. Mr. Munro was an amiable and promising youth. I must observe, there was a large fire blazing close to us, composed of ten or a dozen whole trees. I made it myself on purpose to keep the Tigers off, as I had always heard it would. There were eight or ten of the natives about us ; many shots had been fired at the place ; there was much noise and laughing at the time ; but this ferocious animal disregarded all. The human mind cannot form an idea of the scene ; it turned my very soul within me. The beast was about four feet and a half high, and nine long. His head appeared as large as that of an ox ; his eyes darting fire, and his roar, when he first seized his prey, will never be out of my recollection. We had scarcely pushed our boat from

that accursed shore, when the Tigress made her appearance, raging, almost mad, and remained on the sand, as long as the distance would allow me to see her."

" Oh, dreadful, Uncle Thomas!"

" It is a fearful tale, John, and shows you what a scourge such an animal must be to the inhabitants of the country in which it is found. It generally frequents the desert and uninhabited country; but in some places where civilization has commenced, it prowls about the villages and commits great havoc among the herds of the inhabitants, who therefore find it necessary to adopt various schemes for its destruction: some of these devices are very curious. Here is one:—

" A large cage of strong bamboos is constructed, and fastened firmly to the ground, in a place which the Tigers frequent. In this a man takes up his station for the night. He is generally accompanied by a dog or a goat, which by its extreme agitation is sure to give

notice of the Tiger's approach. His weapons consist of two or three strong spears, and thus provided he wraps himself in his quilt, and very composedly goes to sleep in the full confidence of safety. By and by the Tiger makes his appearance, and after duly examining the cage all round, begins to rear against it, seeking for some means of entering. The hunter, who watches this opportunity, suddenly darts one of his spears into the animal's body, and seldom fails to destroy it."

" That is a very good plan, Uncle Thomas. It does not seem to be attended with much danger, if the cage be strong enough."

" No, Boys, it is not very dangerous, but I don't think any one of you would like to trust yourselves so exposed. Here, however, is another mode of destroying the Tiger, which is practised in some parts of India:—

" Having ascertained the track by which the Tiger returns to his lair, the peasants collect a quantity of the leaves of a shrub called the

prous, which bear a strong resemblance to those of the sycamore, and are common in most of the jungles of India. These leaves are smeared with a species of bird-lime, made by bruising the berries of a tree which is found plentifully in these regions. They are then strewed on the ground, near the spot to which it is understood the Tiger usually retires during noon-tide heat. If the animal happens to tread on one of these leaves his fate is certain. He first shakes his paw, with a view to remove the adhesive incumbrance, but finding that it is not to be got rid of so easily, he rubs it against the side of his head, by which means his eyes, ears, &c., become covered with the adhesive substance. This occasions such discomfort that it causes him to roll himself over and over perhaps among many more smeared leaves, till at length he becomes completely covered, and is deprived of sight. He soon gives vent to his feelings of anxiety produced by this strange and novel predicament, by dreadful howlings, which serve to give notice

to the watchful peasants, that their enemy is in their power, when they assemble and destroy the object of their detestation."

"That is better still, Uncle Thomas! I think it is the most ingenious way of catching such an animal that I ever heard of."

"I must now, Boys, tell you something about the Puma, or American Lion, which is also taken in a very curious manner by the natives of South America. It is generally hunted by means of dogs. When they unkennel a Lion or a Tiger, they pursue him till he stops to defend himself. The hunter, who is mounted on a good steed, follows close behind, and if the dogs seize upon the animal, the hunter jumps off his horse, and knocks it on the head, while it is engaged contending with the dogs. If, however, the dogs are afraid to attack it, the hunter uses his lasso, dexterously fixes it round some part of the animal, and gallops away, dragging it after him. The dogs now rush upon it, when it is soon dispatched.

“When wounded the Puma grows furious, and his attack is then almost irresistible. Here is a story which shows the extreme fierceness of the animal:—Two hunters having gone in quest of game to the Katskill mountains, in the state of New York, each armed with a gun, and accompanied by a dog, they agreed to proceed in contrary directions round the base of a hill, and that, if either discharged his piece, the other should hasten to the spot whence the report proceeded as speedily as possible, to join in the pursuit of whatever game might fall to their lot. They had not long separated, when the one heard the other fire, and, according to promise, hastened to join his companion. For some time he looked for him in every direction, but in vain. At length he discovered the dog of his friend, dead, and dreadfully lacerated. Convinced from this, that the animal which his comrade had fired at was ferocious and formidable, he felt increased alarm for his fate, and sought after him with the greatest anxiety. He

had not proceeded many yards from the spot where the dog lay, when his attention was arrested by the ferocious growl of some wild animal. On raising his eyes to the spot whence the sound proceeded, he discovered a large Puma on the branch of a tree, sitting upon the body of his friend. The animal's eyes glared at him, and it appeared to be hesitating whether it should descend, and make an attack on the survivor also, or relinquish its prey, and decamp. The hunter, aware of the celerity of the Puma's movements, knew that there was no time for reflection, levelled his piece, and mortally wounded the animal, when it and the body of the unfortunate hunter fell together from the tree. His dog then attacked the wounded Puma, but a single blow from its paw laid its assailant prostrate. In this state of things, finding that his comrade was dead, and knowing how extremely dangerous it was to approach the wounded animal, he went in search of assistance, and on returning to the spot he found

his companion, the Puma, and the two dogs, all lying dead.

"The celebrated naturalist Audubon gives an interesting account of a Puma hunt in which he was engaged, in one of the back settlements of North America. In the course of his rambles, investigating the Natural History of the Birds of America, he arrived at the cabin of a settler on the banks of Cold-Water River, and after a hospitable reception, and an evening spent in relating their adventures in the chase, it was agreed in the morning to hunt the Puma which had of late been making sad ravages among the farmer's pigs.

"The hunters," says M. Audubon, "made their appearance just as the sun was emerging from the horizon. They were five in number, and fully equipped for the chase, being mounted on horses which in some parts of Europe might appear sorry nags, but which, in strength, speed, and bottom, are better fitted for pursuing a Puma or a Bear through the woods and morasses

than any in that country. He and myself mounted his two best horses, whilst his sons rode others of inferior quality.

" Few words were uttered by the party until we had reached the edge of the swamp where it was agreed that all should disperse and seek for the fresh track of the Puma, it being previously settled that the discoverer should blow his horn, and remain on the spot until the rest should join him. In less than an hour, the sound of the horn was clearly heard, and sticking close to the squatter, off we went through the thick woods, guided only by the moon and the repeated call of the distant huntsman. We soon reached the spot, and in a short time the rest of the party came up. The best dog was sent forward to attack the animal, and in a few minutes the whole pack were observed diligently tracking and bearing in their course for the interior of the swamp. The rifles were immediately put in trim, and the party followed the dogs at separate distances, within sight of

each other, determined to shoot at no other game than the Puma.

"The dogs soon began to mouth, and suddenly quickened their pace. My companions concluded that the beast was on the ground, and putting our horses to a gentle gallop, we followed the curs, guided by their voices. The noise of the dogs increased, when all of a sudden their mode of barking became altered, and the squatter, urging me to push on, told me the beast was *treed*, by which he meant, that it had got upon some low branch of a large tree, to rest for a few moments, and that should we not succeed in shooting him while thus situated we might expect a long chase of it. As we approached the spot we all by degrees united into a body, but on seeing the dogs at the foot of a large tree separated again, and galloped off to surround it.

"Each hunter now moved with caution, holding his gun ready, and allowing the bridle to dangle on the neck of his horse, as it advanced

slowly towards the dogs. A shot from one of the party was heard, on which the Puma was seen to leap to the ground and bound off with such velocity as to show that he was very unwilling to stand our fire longer. The dogs set off in pursuit with the utmost eagerness and a deafening cry; the hunter who had fired came up, and said that his ball had hit the monster, and had probably broken one of his fore legs near the shoulder, the only place at which he could aim; a slight trail of blood was discovered on the ground, but the curs proceeded at such a rate, that we merely noticed this and put spurs to our horses, which galloped on towards the centre of the swamp. One bayou (a part of the swamp in which the water accumulates) was crossed, then another still larger and more muddy, but the dogs were brushing forward, and as the horses began to pant at a furious rate, we judged it expedient to leave them and advance on foot. These determined hunters knew that the animal, being wounded, would

shortly ascend another tree, where in all probability he would remain for a considerable time, and that it was easy to follow the track of the dogs. We dismounted, took off the saddles and bridles, set the bells attached to the horses' necks at liberty to jingle, hopped the animals (fastened the bridle to one of their legs so that they could not stray far), and left them to shift for themselves.

" After marching for a couple of hours, we again heard the dogs. Each of us pressed forward, elated at the thought of terminating the career of the Puma; some of the dogs were heard whining, although the greater part barked vehemently. We felt assured that the animal was treed, and that he would rest for some time to recover from his fatigue. As we came up to the dogs we discovered the furious animal lying across a large branch close to the trunk of a cotton-wood tree. His broad breast lay towards us, his eyes were at one time bent on us, and again on the dogs, beneath, and around him;

one of his fore-legs hung down loosely by his side, and he lay crouched with his ears lowered close to his head, as if he thought he might remain undiscovered. Three balls were fired at him at a given signal, on which he sprung a few feet from the branch, and tumbled headlong to the ground. Attacked on all sides by the enraged curs, the infuriated animal fought with desperate valour; but the squatter advancing in front of the party, and almost in the midst of the dogs, shot him immediately behind and beneath the left shoulder. He writhed for a moment in agony, and in another lay dead."

"It must be very exciting employment, hunting the Puma, Uncle Thomas!"

"And not a little dangerous too, Boys, for you hear how fiercely he maintains his ground. With all their fierceness, however, the fear of man is over even this relentless race of animals. Captain Head, who has written an amusing book called 'Rough Notes of Rapid Journies across the Pampas' (or plains), thus speaks on this subject:—

“ The fear which all wild animals in America have of man is very singularly exhibited in the Pampas. I often rode towards the Ostriches and Zamas, crouching under the opposite side of my horse’s neck ; but I always found that, although they would allow my loose horse to approach them, they, even when young, ran from me, though little of my figure was visible ; and when I saw them all enjoying themselves in such full liberty, it was at first not pleasing to observe that one’s appearance was every where a signal to them that they should fly from their enemy. Yet it is by this fear ‘ that man hath dominion over the beasts of the field,’ and there is no animal in South America that does not acknowledge this instinctive feeling. As a singular proof of the above, and of the difference between the wild beasts of America and of the old world, I will venture to relate a circumstance which a man sincerely assured me had happened to him in South America.

“ He was trying to shoot some Wild Ducks,



"He felt something heavy strike his feet, and instantly jumping up, saw a large Puma standing on his cloak."

and, in order to approach them unperceived, he put the corner of his poncho (which is a sort of long narrow blanket) over his head, and crawling along the ground upon his hands and knees, the poncho not only covered his body, but trailed along the ground behind him. As he was thus creeping by a large bush of reeds, he heard a loud, sudden noise, between a bark and a roar; he felt something heavy strike his feet, and, instantly jumping up, he saw to his astonishment, a large Puma actually standing on his poncho; and, perhaps, the animal was equally astonished to find himself in the immediate presence of so athletic a man. The man told me he was unwilling to fire, as his gun was loaded with very small shot; and he therefore remained motionless, the Puma standing on his poncho for many seconds; at last the creature turned its head, and walking very slowly away about ten yards, stopped, and turned again, the man still maintained his ground; upon which the Puma tacitly

acknowledged his supremacy, and walked off."

"I dare say the man was very glad to be so easily quit of such a formidable visitor, Uncle Thomas."

"No doubt of it, Frank. I have one other story to tell you about the Puma, which fortunately exhibits it in a more favourable light than some of those which I have told you:—

"During the government of Don Diego de Mendoza, in Paraguay, a dreadful famine raged at Buenos Ayres; yet Diego, afraid to give the Indians a habit of spilling Spanish blood, forbade the inhabitants, on pain of death, to go into the fields, in search of relief, placing soldiers at all the outlets to the country, with orders to fire upon those who should attempt to transgress his orders. A woman, however, called Maldonata, was artful enough to elude the vigilance of the guards, and to effect her escape. After wandering about the country for a long time, she sought shelter in a cavern;

but she had scarcely entered it, when she became dreadfully alarmed, on observing a Puma occupying the same den. She was, however, soon quieted by the animal approaching and caressing her. The poor brute was very ill, and scarcely able to crawl towards her. Maldonata soon discovered what was the cause of the animal's illness, and kindly ministered to it. It soon recovered, and was all gratitude and attention to its kind benefactress, never returning from searching after its daily subsistence, without laying a portion of it at the feet of Maldonata.

" Some time after, Maldonata fell into the hands of the Spaniards ; and, being brought back to Buenos Ayres, was conducted before Don Francis Ruez de Galen, who then commanded there. She was charged with having left the city, contrary to orders. Galen was a man of cruel and tyrannical disposition, and condemned the unfortunate woman to a death which none but the most cruel tyrant could

have devised. He ordered some soldiers to take her into the country, and leave her tied to a tree, either to perish with hunger, or to be torn to pieces by wild beasts. Two days after, he sent the same soldiers to see what had been her fate, when to their great surprise, they found her alive and unhurt, though surrounded by Pumas and Jaguars, while a female Puma, at her feet, kept them at bay. As soon as the Puma saw the soldiers, she retired to some distance; and they unbound Maldonata, who related to them the history of this Puma, which she knew to be the same she had formerly relieved in the cavern. On the soldiers taking Maldonata away, the animal approached, and fawned upon her, as if unwilling to part. The soldiers reported what they had seen to their commander, who could not but pardon a woman who had been so singularly protected, without the danger of appearing more inhuman than Pumas themselves.

“ I must now bid you good-night, Boys ;

to-morrow evening I will tell you some stories illustrating the migrating instinct of animals—one of the most curious in the whole range of Natural History."

"Good night, Uncle Thomas."

CHAPTER VII.

UNCLE THOMAS TELLS ABOUT THE MIGRATING INSTINCT OF ANIMALS:—OF THE HOUSE SWALLOW OF ENGLAND; AND THE ESCULENT SWALLOW, WHOSE NEST IS EATEN BY THE CHINESE. ALSO ABOUT THE PASSENGER PIGEON OF AMERICA; OF THE LAND-CRAB AND ITS MIGRATIONS; AND OF THOSE OF THE SALMON AND THE HERRING.

“ GOOD evening, Uncle Thomas! I heard to-day of a Swallow which for many years returned to the same window, and built its nest in the same corner. Now, as I believe Swallows are birds of passage, and leave this country to spend the winter in warmer climates, I wish you to explain to me how it is that they can return from such distances to the same spot.”

“ That is a question, Frank, which I cannot very well answer, but so many instances of the kind have been observed as to leave no

doubt on the subject. Dr. Jenner, the celebrated naturalist, ascertained the fact by experiment. He marked a certain number of birds, by cutting off two claws. Several of them returned the following year, and one was even found so marked seven years afterwards. The Swallow has sometimes been known even to penetrate into the house, and for years to attach its nest to the same articles of furniture.

“At Camerton Hall, near Bath, a pair of Swallows built their nest for three successive years on the upper part of the frame of an old picture over the chimney. They found their way into the room through a broken pane in one of the windows, and would probably have continued to build in the same place, but the room having been put into repair, they could no longer obtain access to it.”

“Is it want of food which causes birds to migrate, Uncle Thomas?”

The cause of the migration of birds, Frank, is involved in mystery: by some naturalists it

is assigned to the variations of the seasons, or to the plentifullness or scarcity of food. Dr. Jenner, who paid much attention to the subject, came to the conclusion, that it arises from feelings connected with rearing their young. To whatever cause it is assigned, it must be admitted, that it is the operation of an Instinct, impressed on them by the Creator, and cannot be the result of mere experience. Thus, for instance, an old Swallow might know that when its food fails here, it becomes plentiful elsewhere, or that when the weather becomes cold and boisterous in this country, beyond the sea there are more genial climates; but the young bird which had never been more than a few miles from the place where it was hatched can have no such experimental knowledge; yet, when the season arrives we find them all ready to start. I dare say you have seen them, Boys, gathering in flocks and resting on the house-tops, as if taking breath before setting out on their long journey."

"Oh, yes, Uncle Thomas, but I have heard that they dive to the bottom of lakes and ponds, and remain there till winter is over."

"Many foolish stories are told of live Swallows having been found in such situations, Harry, but they are now well known to be fables. The house Swallow, which remains with us till October, spends the rest of the year in Africa. Last autumn I watched with great pleasure the movements of a flock, which was evidently preparing for their arduous flight.

"For several evenings they assembled in large numbers on a tree at a short distance from my house, and, after sitting for some time, one of them, who appeared to be commander-in-chief, kept flying about in all directions, and at length, with a sharp and loudly repeated call, darted up into the air. In an instant the whole congregation were on the wing, following their leader in a sort of spiral track. In a little time they had risen so high, that I lost sight of them, but after a short

absence they again returned and took up their position on the tree which they had just left.

“ This exercise they continued for some time, till one day they set off in reality, and I saw no more of them for the season.”

“ I have read, somewhere, Uncle Thomas, that the Chinese eat Swallows’ nests. Surely these cannot be the same sort of nests as our Swallows build ?”

“ No, Frank, they are not. Various opinions are entertained as to the substance of which the nest of the Esculent Swallow is made. Sir George Staunton, who accompanied Lord Macartney in his embassy to China, gives a very interesting account both of the Swallow and of its nest :—

“ In the Cass,” says Sir George, “ a small island near Sumatra, we found two caverns running horizontally into the side of the rock, and in these were a number of those birds’ nests so much prized by the Chinese epicures. They seemed to be composed of fine filaments,

cemented together by a transparent viscous matter, not unlike what is left by the foam of the sea upon stones alternately covered by the tide, or those gelatinous animal substances found floating on every coast. The nests adhere to each other and to the sides of the cavern, mostly in horizontal rows, without any break or interruption, and at different depths from fifty to five hundred feet. The birds that build these nests are small grey Swallows, with bellies of a dirty white. They were flying about in considerable numbers, but were so small, and their flight was so quick, that they escaped the shot fired at them. The same sort of nests are said to be also found in deep caverns at the foot of the highest mountains in the middle of Java, at a distance from the sea, from which source it is thought that the birds derive no materials, either for their food, or the construction of their nests, as it does not appear probable they should fly in search of either over the intermediate mountains, which

are very high, or against the boisterous winds prevailing thereabouts. They feed on insects which they find hovering over stagnated pools between the mountains, and for the catching of which their wide opening beaks are particularly adapted. They prepare their nests from the best remnants of their food. Their greatest enemy is the Kite, who often intercepts them in their passage to and from the caverns, which are generally surrounded with rocks of grey limestone or white marble. The colour and value of the nest depend on the quantity and quality of the insects caught, and perhaps also on the situation where they are built. Their value is chiefly ascertained by the uniform fineness and delicacy of their texture, those that are white and transparent being most esteemed, and fetching often in China their weight in silver.

“ These nests are a considerable object of traffic among the Javanese, many of whom are employed in it from their infancy. The birds,

after having spent nearly two months in preparing their nests, lay each two eggs, which are hatched in about fifteen days. When the young birds become fledged, it is thought the proper time to seize upon their nests, which is done regularly three times a year, and is effected by means of ladders of bamboo and reeds, by which the people descend into the caverns ; but when these are very deep, rope ladders are preferred. This operation is attended with much danger, and several perish in the attempt. The inhabitants of the mountains generally employed in this business begin always by sacrificing a buffalo, which custom is observed by the Javanese on the eve of every extraordinary enterprise. They also pronounce some prayers, anoint themselves with sweet-scented oil, and smoke the entrance of the cavern with gum-benjamin. Near some of the caverns a tutelar goddess is worshipped, whose priest burns incense, and lays his projecting hands on every person preparing to descend. A flambeau is

carefully prepared at the same time, with a gum which exudes from a tree growing in the vicinity, and which is not easily extinguished by fixed air or subterraneous vapours."

"But how are the nests used, Uncle Thomas? Are they prepared in any way, or are they fit for the table as they are taken down?"

"They are always prepared before they are eaten. The finest sort, which are of a clear colour, and not unlike isinglass, are dissolved in soup, to which they are said to give an exquisite flavour. After being well soaked and cleaned, they are put into an earthen pot with a fowl or duck, and allowed to simmer over a slow fire for twenty-four hours. They are, however, chiefly used as articles of luxury or ornament for the tables of the rich Chinese, to whom they are sold at very high prices, the finest sort sometimes selling so high as two guineas a pound."

"Thank you, Uncle Thomas."

"I have only one more story to tell you about

the Swallow, Boys, and then I must turn to two or three other animals, whose migrations are no less remarkable.

“A Swallow’s nest, built in the west corner of a window facing the north, was so much softened by the long continued beating of the rain against it, that it became too weak to support the weight of the young brood, consisting of five pretty full-grown Swallows. At length the nest fell into the lower corner of the window, leaving the young Swallows exposed to all the fury of the blast. To save the little creatures from an untimely death, the owner of the house benevolently caused a covering to be thrown over them, till the severity of the storm was past. When it had subsided, the sages of the little colony assembled, fluttering round the window, and hovering over the temporary covering of the fallen nest. As soon as this was observed, the covering was removed, and the utmost joy evinced by the group, on finding the young ones alive and unhurt. After feeding

them, and fluttering about for a short time, the Swallows arranged themselves into working order. Each division, taking its appropriate station, commenced instantly to work, and before night-fall they had by their exertions completed an arched canopy over the young brood in the corner where they lay, and thus securely covered them from the severity of the weather. From the time which it took them to perform this piece of architecture, it appeared evident that the young must have perished from cold and hunger, before any single pair could have executed half the job."

"How very kind, Uncle Thomas! Had they been reasoning creatures, they could not have behaved more properly."

"I dare say not, Frank. Such traits overstep the limits of *Instinct*, and almost trespass on those of reason.

"You asked, Frank, if it is want of food which prompts the migration of animals from one place to another. In some cases it is so,

undoubtedly; as, for instance, in that of the American Passenger Pigeon. The account which I am going to read to you is from the work of the great naturalist, Wilson:—

“The migrations of these Pigeons appear to be undertaken rather in quest of food than merely to avoid the cold of the climate; since we find them lingering in the northern regions around Hudson’s Bay so late as December, and since their appearance is so casual and irregular, sometimes not visiting certain districts for several years in any considerable numbers, while at other times they are innumerable. I have often witnessed these migrations in the Gennesee country, often in Pennsylvania, and also in various parts of Virginia, with amazement; but all that I have seen of them are mere straggling parties, when compared with the congregated millions which I have since beheld in the western forests in the states of Ohio, Kentucky, and the Indiana territory. These fertile and extensive regions abound with the nutritious

beech nut, which constitutes the chief food of the wild Pigeon. In seasons when these nuts are abundant, corresponding multitudes of Pigeons may be confidently expected. It sometimes happens that, having consumed the whole produce of the beech trees in an extensive district, they discover another at the distance of perhaps sixty or eighty miles, to which they regularly repair every morning, and return as regularly in the course of the day, or in the evening, to their place of general rendezvous, or, as it is generally called, the roosting place. These roosting places are always in the woods, and sometimes occupy a large extent of forest. When they have frequented one of these places for some time, the appearance it exhibits is surprising. The ground is covered to the depth of several inches with their dung; all the tender grass and underwood destroyed; the surface strewed with large limbs of trees, broken down by the weight of the birds clustering one above another, and the trees themselves, for thousands

of acres, killed as completely as if girdled with an axe. The marks of this desolation remain for many years on the spot, and numerous places could be pointed out, where for several years after scarcely a single vegetable made its appearance.

" When these roosts are first discovered, the inhabitants from considerable distances visit them in the night with guns, clubs, long poles, pots of sulphur, and various other engines of destruction. In a few hours they fill many sacks and load their horses with them. By the Indians, a pigeon roost or breeding place is considered an important source of national profit and dependence for the season, and all their active ingenuity is exercised on the occasion. The breeding place differs from the former in its greater extent. In the western countries before mentioned, these are generally in beech woods, and often extend in nearly a straight line across the country for a great way. Not far from Shelbyville, in the State of Kentucky, about

five years ago, there was one of these breeding places, stretching through the woods in nearly a north and south direction, which was several miles in breadth, and was said to be upwards of forty miles in extent. In this tract almost every tree was furnished with nests wherever the branches could accommodate them.

" As soon as the young were fully grown, and before they left the nests, numerous parties of the inhabitants, from all parts of the adjacent country, came with wagons, axes, beds, cooking utensils, many of them accompanied by the greater part of their families, and encamped for several days in this immense nursery. Several of them informed me that the noise in the woods was so great as to terrify their horses, and that it was difficult for one person to hear another speak without bawling in his ear. The ground was strewed with broken limbs of trees, eggs, and young squab Pigeons which had been precipitated from above, and on which herds of

Hogs were fattening; Hawks, Buzzards, and Eagles were sailing about in great numbers, and seizing the squabs from their nests at pleasure; while from twenty feet upwards to the tops of the trees, the view through the woods presented a perpetual tumult of crowding and fluttering multitudes of Pigeons, their wings roaring like thunder, mingled with the frequent crash of falling timber; for now the axemen were at work, cutting down those trees which seemed to be most crowded with nests, and contrived to fell them in such a manner, that in their descent they might bring down several others, by which means the falling of one large tree sometimes produced two hundred squabs, little inferior in size to the old Pigeons, and almost one mass of fat. On some single trees, upwards of one hundred nests were found, each containing one young only, a circumstance in the history of this bird not generally known to naturalists. It was dangerous to walk under these fluttering and flying millions, from the frequent fall of

large branches, broken down by the weight of the multitudes above, and which in their descent often destroyed numbers of the birds themselves.

" I had left the public road to visit the remains of the breeding place near Shelbyville, and was traversing the woods with my gun on my way to Frankfort, when, about one o'clock, the Pigeons which I had observed flying the greater part of the morning northerly began to return in such immense numbers as I never before had witnessed; coming to an opening by the side of a creek called the Benson, where I had a more uninterrupted view, I was astonished at their appearance. They were flying with great steadiness and rapidity, at a height beyond gun-shot, and several strata deep, and so close together, that could shot have reached them, one discharge could not have failed in bringing down several individuals. From right to left as far as the eye could reach, the breadth of this vast procession extended, seeming every

where equally crowded. Curious to determine how long this appearance would continue, I took out my watch to note the time, and sat down to observe them. It was then half-past one; I sat for more than an hour, but instead of a diminution of this prodigious procession, it seemed rather to increase both in numbers and rapidity, and anxious to reach Frankfort before night, I arose and went on. About four o'clock in the afternoon, I crossed the Kentucky river at the town of Frankfort, at which time the living torrent above my head seemed as numerous and as extensive as ever; and long after this, I observed them in large bodies that continued to pass for six or eight minutes, and these again were followed by other detached bodies, all moving in the same south-east direction, till after six in the evening. The great breadth of front which this mighty multitude preserved would seem to intimate a corresponding breadth of their breeding place, which, by several gentlemen who had lately passed through part of it,

was stated to me at several miles. It was said to be in Green County, and that the young began to fly about the middle of March. On the 17th of April, forty-nine miles beyond Danville, and not far from Green River, I crossed this same breeding place, where the nests for more than three miles spotted every tree; the leaves not being yet out, I had a fair prospect of them, and was really astonished at their numbers. A few bodies of Pigeons lingered yet in different parts of the woods, the roaring of whose wings was heard in various quarters around me.

“The vast quantity of food which these multitudes consume is a serious loss to the other animals, such as Bears, Pigs, Squirrels, which are dependent on the fruits of the forest. I have taken from the crop of a single wild Pigeon a good handful of the kernels of beech nuts intermixed with acorns and chesnuts. To form a rough estimate of the daily consumption of one of these immense flocks, let us first

attempt to calculate the numbers above mentioned, as seen in passing between Frankfort and the Indian Territory. If we suppose this column to have been one mile in breadth (and I believe it to have been much more), and that it moved at the rate of one mile in a minute, four hours, the time it continued passing, would make its whole length two hundred and forty miles. Again, supposing that each square yard of this moving body comprehended three Pigeons, the square yards in the whole space, multiplied by three, would give two thousand two hundred and thirty millions two hundred and seventy-two thousand Pigeons!—an almost incredible multitude, and yet far below the actual amount. Computing each of these to consume half a pint of mast (nuts, and other seeds of trees) daily, the whole quantity, at this rate, would equal seventeen millions four hundred and twenty-four thousand bushels per day! Heaven has wisely and graciously given to these birds rapidity of flight, and a disposition to range over

vast uncultivated tracts of the earth; otherwise they must have perished in the districts where they resided, or devoured the whole productions of agriculture, as well as those of the forests.

"The appearance of large detached flocks of these birds in the air, and the various evolutions they display, are strikingly picturesque and interesting. In descending the Ohio by myself, I often rested on my oars to contemplate their aerial manœuvres. A column of eight or ten miles in length would appear from Kentucky high in air, steering across to Indiana. The leaders of this great body would sometimes gradually vary their course, till it formed a large bend of more than a mile in diameter, those behind tracing the exact route of their predecessors. This would continue sometimes long after both extremities were beyond the reach of sight; so that the whole with its glittering undulations marked a space on the face of the heavens resembling the windings of a vast majestic river. When this bend became very

great, the birds, as if sensible of the unnecessarily circuitous route they were taking, suddenly changed their direction, so that what was in column before became an immense front, straightening all its indentures until it swept the heavens in one vast and infinitely extended line. Other lesser bodies also united with each other as they happened to approach, and with such ease and elegance of evolution, forming new figures and varying these as they united or separated, that I was never tired of contemplating them. Sometimes a Hawk would sweep on a particular part of the column from a great height, when almost as quick as lightning that part shot downwards out of the common track, but soon rising again, continued advancing at the same height as before. This inflection was continued by those behind, who, on arriving at this point, dived down almost perpendicularly to a great depth, and rising followed the exact path of those that went before.

“ Happening to go ashore one charming after-

noon to purchase some milk at a house that stood near the river, and while talking with the people within doors, I was suddenly struck with astonishment at a loud rushing roar, succeeded by instant darkness, which for the first moment I took for a tornado about to overwhelm the house, and every thing around, in destruction. The people, observing my surprise, coolly said, ‘It is only the Pigeons,’ and on running out, I beheld a flock thirty or forty yards in width, sweeping along very low between the house and the mountain or height that formed the second bank of the river. These continued crossing for more than a quarter of an hour, and at length varied their bearing, so as to pass over the mountain, behind which they disappeared before the rear came up.”

“That is amazing, Uncle Thomas! two thousand millions of live birds! I can scarcely form an idea of such a mass of living creatures.”

“There is something almost overwhelming in the thought, Frank; and yet in some parts of

the world are to be found flocks of animals perhaps even more astonishing, when we consider how much less they are fitted for moving about, travelling at stated intervals from the mountains to the sea-coast, and returning again to their old habitations, after having fulfilled the purposes for which this Instinctive feeling was implanted in them."

"Which animals do you mean, Uncle Thomas?"

"I allude to the Land-Crab, which is a native of the Bahamas, and also of most of the other islands between the tropics. They live in clefts of the rocks, or holes which they dig for themselves among the mountains, and feed on vegetables. About the month of April or May, they descend to the sea-coast in a body of millions at a time, for the purpose of depositing their spawn. They march in a direct line towards their destination, and seldom turn out of their way, even should they encounter a wall or a house, but boldly attempt to scale it.

If, however, they arrive at a river, they wind along the course of the stream, and thus reach the sea.

“ In their procession they are as regular as an army under the command of an experienced general, and are usually divided into three battalions. The first body consists of the strongest males, which march forward to clear the route and face the greatest dangers. The main body is composed of females, and is formed into columns, sometimes extending fifty or sixty yards in breadth, and three miles in depth. At a considerable distance follows the third division or rear guard, a straggling undisciplined mass, consisting of both males and females, but neither so robust nor so vigorous as the former.

“ Though they are easily drowned, a certain portion of moisture seems necessary to the existence of these animals, and the advanced guard is often obliged to halt from the want of rain. The females, indeed, never leave the

mountains till the rainy season has fairly set in. They march chiefly during the night, but if it happens to rain during the day, they always take advantage of the circumstance to move forward. When the sun is hot they halt till evening. They travel very slowly, and are sometimes three months in gaining the shore. When alarmed they run in a confused and disorderly manner, holding up and clattering their nippers in a threatening attitude, and bite severely. If in their journey any of them should be so maimed as to be unable to proceed, the others fall upon it and devour it.

“ Arrived on the coast, they prepare to deposit their spawn. They go to the edge of the water, and allow the waves to wash twice or thrice over their bodies, and then withdraw to seek a lodging upon the land. After a short time they again seek the sea-side, and leave the spawn, which strongly resembles the roe of the Herring, to be brought to maturity by the heat of the sun. Much of it is devoured by the

fishes, which watch their annual arrival; that which escapes soon arrives at maturity, and millions of little Crabs are then to be seen slowly travelling towards the mountains.

“ The old ones in the mean time seek to return to their old haunts, but so feeble are they that they seem scarcely able to crawl along. Some of them, indeed, are obliged to remain in the level parts of the country till they recover, making holes in the earth, which they block up with fallen leaves and other substances. In these they cast their old shells, after which they soon recover, and become very fat.

“ At the season of their descent from the mountains, the natives of the islands which they inhabit, to whom they afford a delicious food, eagerly wait for them and take them in thousands. In their descent they are caught for the roe or spawn only, the flesh being then poor and lean: but on their return from the sea-side they are in great repute, being then fat and high flavoured.

"The Crab-catchers adopt various modes of securing them, but they are obliged to be very cautious, for when the animals perceive themselves attacked, they throw themselves on their backs and snap their claws about, pinching whatever they lay hold of very severely. The Crab-catchers, however, manage to seize them by the legs in such a manner, as that the nippers cannot reach them."

"You said, Uncle Thomas, that the fishes watch the descent of the Crabs, that they might feed on the spawn. Do you think that fishes are as intelligent as the higher classes of animals, Uncle Thomas?"

"No doubt of it, Frank. Many curious stories of the intelligence of fishes are on record. Of their affection we have also many proofs. A person who kept two small fishes in a glass separated them, when the one which was left refused to eat, and showed evident symptoms of unhappiness till his companion was restored to him.

“ Many fishes migrate from place to place, in the same way as the animals of which I have just told you. The Salmon leaves the sea, and seeks its way up the rivers, stemming their most rapid currents, and scaling their highest waterfalls with a determination which can only be the result of an Instinct implanted by their Creator.”

“ And the Herring, Uncle Thomas ; does not it come every year from the Polar seas to spawn on our shores ? I read a very interesting account of their progress southwards somewhere lately.”

“ I can tell you where, Frank ; I will show it you, and when you have read it aloud, I will point out one or two mistakes, which it is as well to clear your mind of. It is in old Pennant’s work ; here it is ; will you read it to us, John ?”

“ With pleasure, Uncle Thomas :—

“ This mighty army begins to put itself in motion in the spring. They begin to appear off

the Shetland Islands in April and May. This is the first check this army meets in its march southward. There it is divided into two parts; one wing of those destined to visit the Scottish coast takes to the east, the other to the western shores of Great Britain, and fill every bay and creek with their numbers; others proceed towards Yarmouth, the great and ancient mart of Herrings; they then pass through the British Channel, and after that in a manner disappear. Those which take to the west, after offering themselves to the Hebrides, where the great stationary fishery is, proceed towards the north of Ireland, where they meet with a second interruption and are obliged to make a second division; the one takes to the western side and is scarcely perceived, being soon lost in the immensity of the Atlantic, but the other, which passes into the Irish Sea, rejoins, and feeds the inhabitants of most of the coasts that border on it. The brigades, as we call them, which are separated from the greater columns, are often

capricious in their motions, and do not show an invariable attachment to their haunts."

"Thank you, John. Now all this sounds very fine, and seems systematic enough. It has but one objection—it is quite untrue. It is more than doubtful if the Herring frequents the Polar seas at all; the most distinguished naturalists are of opinion that it never leaves the neighbourhood of our own coasts, but merely retires to the deep water after it has spawned, and there remains till the return of another season causes it again to revisit the shores for a similar purpose. So you see, Frank, it does not follow that an interesting account of an animal's habits is necessarily a true one."

"Oh no, Uncle Thomas! I never imagined that."

"Very well, Boys—Good night!"

CHAPTER VIII.

UNCLE THOMAS TELLS ABOUT THE BABOONS, AND THEIR PLUNDERING EXCURSIONS TO THE GARDENS AT THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE; ALSO ABOUT LE VAILLANT'S BABOON KEEPS, AND HIS PECULIARITIES; AND RELATED AN AMUSING STORY ABOUT A YOUNG MONKEY, DEPRIVED OF ITS MOTHER, PUTTING ITSELF UNDER THE FOSTERING CARE OF A WIG-BLOCK !

“ OH, Uncle Thomas, we saw such a strange looking creature to-day. It seemed to be a very large Monkey ; it was as big as a boy.”

“ I heard of it, Boys, though I did not see it. It was a Baboon, and one of the largest of the species.—It was what is called the Dog-faced Baboon.”

“ Where do such animals come from, Uncle Thomas ?”

“ From Africa, John, and I believe they are not to be found elsewhere. They are very fierce and mischievous creatures, and are said

sometimes even to attack man, but this I believe to be an exaggeration. Immense troops of them inhabit the mountains in the neighbourhood of the Cape of Good Hope, whence they descend in bands to plunder the gardens and orchards. In these excursions they move on a concerted plan, placing sentinels on commanding spots to give notice of the approach of an enemy. On the appearance of danger, the sentinel utters a loud yell, upon which the whole troop retreats with the utmost precipitation."

"Do they carry their spoil with them when they are thus scared, Uncle Thomas?"

"When disturbed, John, they are said to break in pieces the fruit which they have gathered, and cram it into their cheek pouches—receptacles with which nature has furnished them for keeping articles of food till they are wanted.

"A celebrated traveller in Africa, named Le Vaillant, had a Dog-faced Baboon which

accompanied him on his journey, and he found its Instincts of great service to him in various ways. As a sentinel he was better than any of the Dogs. So quick was his sense of danger, that he often gave notice of the approach of beasts of prey, when every thing else seemed sunk in security. He was also very useful in guarding the people of the expedition from danger, from using unwholesome or poisonous fruits. The animal's name was Kees. Here is the very interesting account which his master gives of him, which I will read to you :—

“ Whenever we found fruits or roots, with which my Hottentots were unacquainted, we did not touch them till Kees had tasted them. If he threw them away, we concluded that they were either of a disagreeable flavour, or of a pernicious quality, and left them untasted. The Ape possesses a peculiar property, wherein he differs greatly from other animals, and resembles man,—namely, that he is by nature equally gluttonous and inquisitive. Without

necessity, and without appetite, he tastes every thing that falls in his way, or that is given to him. But Kees had a still more valuable quality,—he was an excellent sentinel; for whether by day or night he immediately sprang up on the slightest appearance of danger. By his cry, and the symptoms of fear which he exhibited, we were always apprized of the approach of an enemy, even though the Dogs perceived nothing of it. The latter at length learned to rely upon him with such confidence, that they slept on in perfect tranquillity. I often took Kees with me when I went a hunting; and when he saw me preparing for sport, he exhibited the most lively demonstrations of joy. On the way he would climb into the trees to look for gum, of which he was very fond. Sometimes he discovered to me honey, deposited in the clefts of rocks, or hollow trees. But if he happened to have met with neither honey nor gum, and his appetite had become sharp by his running about, I always witnessed

a very ludicrous scene. In those cases, he looked for roots, which he ate with great greediness, especially a particular kind, which, to his cost, I also found to be very well tasted and refreshing, and therefore insisted upon sharing with him. But Kees was no fool. As soon as he found such a root, and I was not near enough to seize upon my share of it, he devoured it in the greatest haste, keeping his eyes all the while riveted on me. He accurately measured the distance I had to pass before I could get to him; and I was sure of coming too late. Sometimes, however, when he had made a mistake in his calculation, and I came upon him sooner than he expected, he endeavoured to hide the root, in which case I compelled him, by a box on the ear, to give me up my share. But this treatment caused no malice between us; we remained as good friends as ever. In order to draw these roots out of the ground, he employed a very ingenious method, which afforded me much amuse-

ment. He laid hold of the herbage with his teeth stemmed his fore feet against the ground, and drew back his head, which gradually pulled out the root. But if this expedient, for which he employed his whole strength, did not succeed, he laid hold of the leaves as before, as close to the ground as possible, and then threw himself heels over head, which gave such a concussion to the root, that it never failed to come out.

“ When Kees happened to tire on the road, he mounted upon the back of one of my Dogs, who was so obliging as to carry him whole hours. One of them, however, which was larger and stronger than the rest hit upon a very ingenious artifice to avoid being pressed into this piece of service. As soon as Kees leaped upon his back he stood still, and let the train pass without moving from the spot. Kees still persisted in his intention, till we were almost out of his sight, when he found himself at length compelled to dismount, upon which

both the Baboon and Dog exerted all their speed to overtake us. The latter, however, gave him the start and kept a good look-out after him, that he might not serve him in the same manner again. In fact, Kees enjoyed a certain authority with all my Dogs, for which he perhaps was indebted to the superiority of his Instinct. He could not endure a competitor; if any of the Dogs came too near him when he was eating, he gave them a box on the ear, which compelled him immediately to retire to a respectful distance.

“ Serpents excepted, there were no animals of whom Kees stood in such great dread as of his own species,—perhaps owing to a consciousness, that he had lost a portion of his natural capacities. Sometimes he heard the cry of the other Apes among the mountains, and, terrified as he was, he yet answered them. But if they approached nearer, and he saw any of them, he fled, with a hideous cry, crept between our legs, and trembled all over. It

was very difficult to compose him, and it was some time before he recovered from his fright.

" Like other domestic animals, Kees was addicted to stealing. He understood admirably well how to loose the strings of a basket, in order to take victuals out of it, especially milk, of which he was very fond. My people chastised him for these thefts; but that did not make him amend his conduct. I myself sometimes whipped him; but then he ran away, and did not return again to the tent, until it grew dark. Once as I was about to dine, and had put the beans, which I had boiled for myself upon a plate, I heard the voice of a bird, with which I was not acquainted. I left my dinner standing, seized my gun, and run out of my tent. In about a quarter of an hour, I returned, with the bird in my hand; but to my astonishment, found not a single bean upon the plate. Kees had stolen them all, and taken himself out of the way. When he had com-

mitted any trespass of this kind, he used always about the time when I drank tea to return quietly, and seat himself in his usual place, with every appearance of innocence, as if nothing had happened; but this evening he did not show himself; and on the following day, also, he was not seen by any of us; and, in consequence, I began to grow seriously uneasy about him, and apprehensive that he might be lost for ever, but on the third day, one of my people, who had been to fetch water, informed me that he had seen Kees in the neighbourhood, but that as soon as the animal espied him, he had concealed himself again. I immediately went out and beat the whole neighbourhood with my Dogs. All at once I heard a cry like that which Kees used to make when I returned from shooting, and had not taken him with me. I looked about and at length espied him, endeavouring to hide himself behind the large branches of a tree. I now called to him in a friendly tone of voice, and

made motions to him to come down to me; but he could not trust me, and I was obliged to climb up the tree to fetch him. He did not attempt to escape, and we returned together to my quarters; here he expected to receive his punishment; but I did nothing, as it would have been of no use.

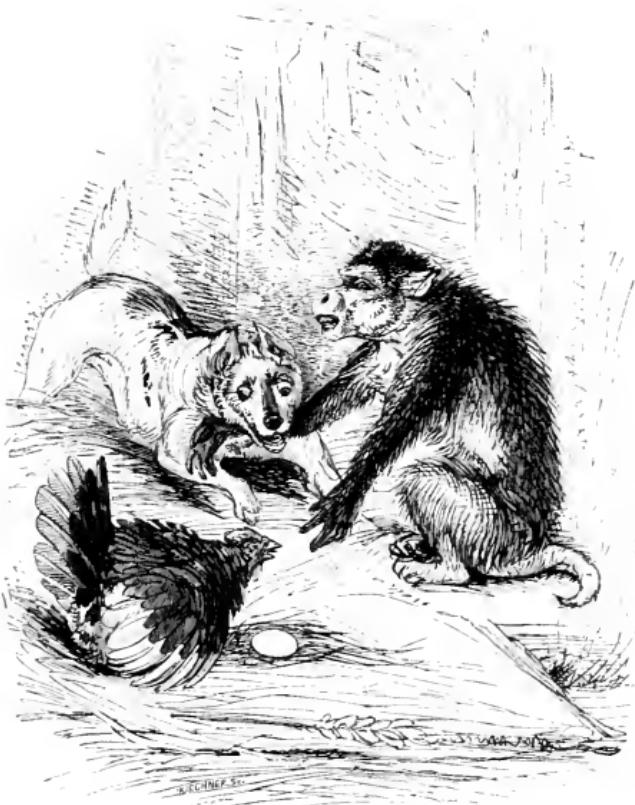
“ When, exhausted with the heat of the sun, and the fatigues of the day, with my throat and mouth covered with dust and perspiration, I was ready to sink gasping to the ground, in tracts destitute of shade, and longed even for the dirtiest ditch water; but after seeking long in vain, lost all hope of finding any in the parched soil; in such distressing moments my faithful Kees never moved from my side. We sometimes got out of our carriage, and then his sure Instinct led him to a plant. Frequently the stalk was fallen off, and then all his endeavours to pull it out were in vain. In such cases, he began to scratch in the earth with his paws; but as that would also have proved ineffectual, I came to

his assistance with my dagger or my knife, and we honestly divided the refreshing root with each other.

“ An officer, wishing one day to put the fidelity of my Baboon Kees, to the test, pretended to strike me. At this Kees flew in a violent rage, and, from that time, he could never endure the sight of the officer. If he only saw him at a distance, he began to cry and make all kinds of grimaces, which evidently showed that he wished to revenge the insult that had been done to me; he ground his teeth, and endeavoured, with all his might, to fly at his face, but that was out of his power, as he was chained down. The offender several times endeavoured, in vain, to conciliate him, by offering him dainties, but he remained long implacable.

“ When any eatables had been pilfered at my quarters, the fault was always laid first upon Kees; and rarely was the accusation unfounded. For a time the eggs which a Hen laid me were

constantly stolen, and I wished to ascertain whether I had to attribute this loss also to him. For this purpose, I went one morning to watch him, and waited till the Hen announced by her cackling that she had laid an egg. Kees was sitting upon my carriage; but the moment he heard the Hen's voice he leapt down, and was running to fetch the egg. When he saw me he suddenly stopped, and affected a careless posture, swaying himself backwards upon his hind legs, and assuming a very innocent look; in short, he employed all his art to deceive me with respect to his design. His hypocritical manœuvres only confirmed my suspicions, and, in order in my turn to deceive him, I pretended not to attend to him, and turned my back to the bush where the Hen was cackling, upon which he immediately sprang to the place. I ran after him, and came up to him at the moment when he had broken the egg, and was swallowing it. Having caught the thief in the fact, I gave him a good beating upon the spot; but this severe



"A contest now took place between them who should have the egg."

chastisement did not prevent his soon stealing fresh-laid eggs again. As I was convinced that I should never be able to break Kees of his natural vices, and that, unless I chained him up every morning, I should never get an egg, I endeavoured to accomplish my purpose in another manner: I trained one of my Dogs, as soon as the Hen cackled, to run to the nest, and bring me the egg without breaking it. In a few days the Dog had learned his lesson; but Kees, as soon as he heard the Hen cackle, ran with him to the nest. A contest now took place between them, who should have the egg; often the Dog was foiled, although he was the stronger of the two. If he gained the victory, he ran joyfully to me with the egg, and put it into my hand. Kees, nevertheless, followed him, and did not cease to grumble and make threatening grimaces at him, till he saw me take the egg,—as if he was comforted for the loss of his booty by his adversary's not retaining it for himself. If Kees had got hold of the egg, he endeavoured

to run with it to a tree, where, having devoured it, he threw down the shells upon his adversary, as if to make game of him. In that case, the Dog returned, looking ashamed, from which I could conjecture the unlucky adventure he had met with.

“ Kees was always the first awake in the morning, and, when it was the proper time he awoke the Dogs, who were accustomed to his voice, and, in general, obeyed without hesitation the slightest motions by which he communicated his orders to them, immediately taking their posts about the tent and carriage, as he directed them.”

“ What a delightful companion Kees must have been, Uncle Thomas !”

“ He must at least have been an amusing as well as a useful one, Frank. There are, however, great variations in this respect among the Monkeys; some of them are most lively creatures, seldom sitting still for a couple of minutes, while others are retired and gloomy in their dispo-

sitions, and some are most fickle and uncertain. The Fair Monkey, though one of the most beautiful of the tribe is of the latter description, as the following story will testify :—

“ An animal of this class, which from its extreme beauty and gentleness was allowed to ramble at liberty about a ship, soon became a great favourite among the crew, and in order to make him perfectly happy, as they imagined, they procured him a wife. For some weeks he was a devoted husband, and showed his wife every attention and respect. Bye and bye however, he grew cool, and became jealous of any kind of civility shown her by the master of the vessel, and began to use her with much cruelty. His treatment made her wretched and dull ; and she bore the spleen of her husband with that fortitude which is characteristic of the female sex of the human species. And pug, like the lords of the creation, was up to deceit, and practised pretended kindness to his spouse, to effect a diabolical scheme, which he seemed to preme-

ditate. One morning, when the sea ran very high, he seduced her aloft, and drew her attention to an object at some distance from the yard-arm ; her attention being fixed, he all of a sudden applied his paw to her rear, and tumbled her into the sea, where she fell a victim to his cruelty. This feat seemed to afford him high gratification, for he descended in great spirits."

" Oh, what a wretched creature, Uncle Thomas ! I wonder the sailors did not throw him into the sea also."

" Stay, Frank, you are somewhat too hasty. He deserved certainly to be punished ; but I doubt whether it would have been proper to have dealt so summarily with him for his misdeed. All Monkeys are not, however, equally cruel ; some of them, indeed, are remarkable for the instinctive kindness which they evince towards their young. When threatened by danger, they mount them on their back, or clasp them firmly to their breast, to which the young creatures secure themselves, by means of their long and

powerful arms, so as to allow of their parent moving about, and springing from branch to branch, with nearly as much facility as if she were perfectly free from incumbrance."

" Oh, I can readily believe that, Uncle Thomas. One day lately, at the Zoological Gardens, I saw two Monkeys clasping a young one between them, to keep it warm. They seemed so fond of it!"

" Yes, Frank, I have also seen them occupied in the same way. I was quite delighted at such an unexpected exhibition of tenderness.

" Some of the Monkeys which are natives of the American continent have the singular characteristic of prehensile tails; that is, of laying hold of branches of trees with their tails, with nearly as much ease and security as they can with their hands. The facilities which this affords them for moving about with celerity among the branches is astonishing. If it makes a single coil round a branch, it is quite sufficient, not only to support the weight of the ani-

mal, but to enable it to swing in such a manner as to gain a fresh hold with its feet."

"That is very curious, Uncle Thomas. Is there any other animal which has this singular power?"

"Oh, yes, Frank, several of the Lizards have the power, as well as some other animals,—the little Harvest Mouse, for instance; but none of them are possessed of it in so high a degree as the American Monkeys.

"I have now, Boys, pretty well exhausted my stories about the Monkey tribe. I recollect only one more at present, and it occurred to the same traveller to whom Kees belonged.

"In one of his excursions he happened to kill a female Monkey, which carried a young one on her back. The little creature, as if insensible of its mother's death, continued to cling to the dead body till the party reached their evening quarters; and even then it required considerable force to disengage it. No sooner, however, did it feel itself alone, than it darted

towards a wooden block, on which was placed the wig of Le Vaillant's father, mistaking it for its dead mother. To this it clung most pertinaciously by its fore paws; and such was the force of this deceptive feeling, that it remained in the same position for about three weeks, all this time evidently mistaking the wig for its mother! It was fed, from time to time, with Goat's milk; and, at length, emancipated itself voluntarily, by quitting the fostering care of the peruke. The confidence which it ere long assumed, and the amusing familiarity of its manners, soon rendered it a favourite. The unsuspecting naturalist, however, soon found that he introduced a wolf in sheep's clothing into his dwelling: for, one morning, on entering his chamber, the door of which had been imprudently left open, he beheld his young favourite making a hearty breakfast on a very noble collection of insects. In the first transports of his anger, he resolved to strangle the Monkey in his arms: but his rage immediately

gave way to pity, when he perceived that the crime of its voracity had carried the punishment along with it. In eating the beetles, it had swallowed several of the pins on which they were transfixed. Its agony, consequently, became great: and all his efforts were unable to preserve its life."

"Poor creature! How unfortunate, Uncle Thomas. It must, however, have been a very stupid animal to mistake a wig for its mother."

"Very much so indeed, Boys!—It is now, however, our hour for parting."

"Good night, Uncle Thomas."

CHAPTER IX.

UNCLE THOMAS CONCLUDES STORIES ABOUT INSTINCT WITH SEVERAL INTERESTING ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE AFFECTIONS OF ANIMALS, PARTICULARLY OF THE INSTINCT OF MATERNAL AFFECTION; AND POINTS OUT THE BENEFICENT CARE OF PROVIDENCE IN IMPLANTING IN THE BREASTS OF EACH OF HIS CREATURES THE INSTINCTS WHICH ARE NECESSARY FOR ITS PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION.

"Good evening, Uncle Thomas! We were so delighted with the adventures of Kees, the Monkey, that we wish to know if you have any more such amusing stories to tell us."

"Oh yes, Boys, plenty, but it is now time to bring these STORIES ABOUT INSTINCT to a close. I am, therefore, going to conclude by narrating one or two stories about the affections of animals. I wish to impress your minds with feelings of kindness towards them, and I think that the best way to do so is to exhibit them to you in their gentleness and love; to show you

that they too partake of the kindlier emotions by which the heart of man is moved, and that the feelings of maternal affection, and of friendship, and of fidelity, are as much the prerogatives of the lower animals as they are of man himself. Perhaps one of the most amiable lights in which the affections of animals are exhibited to us is their love and attachment to their offspring. You have all seen how regardless of danger a domestic Hen, one of the most timid and defenceless of animals, becomes when she has charge of a brood of chickens. At other times she is alarmed by the slightest noise—the sudden rustle of a leaf makes her shrink with fear and apprehension. Yet, no sooner do her little helpless offspring escape from the shell than she becomes armed with a determination of which even birds of prey stand in awe."

"Oh, yes, Uncle Thomas, I have often seen a Hen attack a large Dog and drive it away from her chickens."

“ It marks the wisdom of the omnipotent and all-wise Creator, Boys, that he has implanted in the hearts of each of his creatures the particular instincts which were necessary for their safety and protection. Thus, in the case I have just spoken of, the instinctive courage with which the mother is endowed, you will find to be the best security which could have been devised for this purpose. In some other birds this instinct exhibits itself in a different way. If you happen to approach the nest of the Lapwing, for instance, the old birds try every means to attract your attention, and to lure you away from the sacred spot. They will fly close by you, and in an irregular manner, as if wounded ; but no sooner do they find that their stratagem has been successful, and that you have passed the nest unobserved, than they at once take a longer flight, and soon leave you behind.”

“ How very singular, Uncle Thomas ! Does the Lapwing defend its young with as much courage as the Hen ?”

"I am not aware that it does, Frank, though I think it is not very likely. As its Instinct teaches it to finesse in the way which I have told you, I should not expect to find that it does so with equal spirit. Even the Pigeon, the very emblem of gentleness and love, boldly pecks at the rude hand which is extended towards its young, during the earlier stages of their existence. If you come by chance on the brood of a Partridge, the mother flutters along, as if she was so much wounded that it was impossible to escape, and the young ones squat themselves close by the earth. When by her cunning wiles she has led you to a little distance, and you discover that her illness was feigned, you return to the spot to seek for the young, and you find that they too are gone: no sooner is your back turned than they run and hide themselves in some more secret place, where they remain till the well-known call of the mother again collects them under her wing.

"I lately heard a most interesting story of

the boldness of a pair of Blackbirds in defence of their young. A Cat was one day observed mounted on the top of a railing, endeavouring to get at a nest which was near it, containing a brood of young birds. On the Cat's approach the mother left the nest, and flew to meet it in a state of great alarm, placing herself almost within its reach, and uttering the most piteous screams of wildness and despair. Alarmed by his partner's cries the male bird soon discovered the cause of her distress, and in a state of equal trepidation flew to the place, uttering loud and piercing screams, sometimes settling on the fence just before the Cat, which was unable to make a spring in consequence of the narrowness of its footing. After a little time, seeing that their distress made no impression on their assailant, the male bird flew at the Cat, settled on its back, and pecked at its head with so much violence that it fell to the ground, followed by the Blackbird, which at length succeeded in driving it away. Foiled in this attempt, the

Cat, a short time after, again returned to the charge, and was a second time vanquished, which so intimidated her, that she relinquished all attempts to get at the young birds. For several days, whenever she made her appearance in the garden, she was set upon by the Blackbirds, and at length became so much afraid of them, that she scampered to a place of security whenever she saw them approach."

"That was very bold indeed, Uncle Thomas. Birds seem to be all very much attached to their young."

"Very much so, Harry; but perhaps not more so than many quadrupeds. Here is a story of the Squirrel's affection, which, though it does not exhibit an instance of active defence against its enemies, affords one of endurance equally admirable.

"In cutting down some trees on the estate at Petersham, recently purchased by the crown, for the purpose of being annexed to Richmond park, the axe was applied to the root of a tall

tree, on the top of which was a Squirrel's nest. A rope was fastened to the tree for the purpose of pulling it down more expeditiously ; the workmen cut at the roots ; the rope was pulled ; the tree swayed backwards and forwards, and at length fell. During all these operations a female Squirrel never attempted to desert her new-born young, but remained with them in the nest. When the tree fell down, she was thrown out and secured unhurt, and was put into a cage with her young ones. She suckled them for a short time, but refused to eat. Her maternal affection, however, remained till the last moment of her life, and she died in the act of affording all the nourishment in her power to her offspring.

“ We are too apt, Boys, to overlook the admirable lessons which such stories as these inculcate. They should teach us kindness to each other—kindness, not only to those of our own species, but kindness to all creatures. If the lower animals love each other so warmly and affectionately, how much more ought man, to

whom the Creator has been so beneficent, to love his fellow creatures. But though the affection of animals to their offspring is an admirable mode of its development, it is far from being the only one. Here is an instance of attachment in Horses which was so strong as to terminate fatally.

“ During the Peninsular war two Horses, which had long been associated together, assisting to drag the same piece of artillery, and standing together the shock of many battles, became so much attached to each other as to be inseparable companions. At length one of them was killed. After the battle in which this took place, the other was picketed as usual, and his food brought to him. He refused, however, to eat, and kept constantly turning round his head to look for his companion, sometimes neighing as if to call her. All the attention which was bestowed upon him was of no avail ; though surrounded by other Horses he took no notice of them, but incessantly bewailed his absent friend.

He died shortly after, having refused to taste food from the time his former companion was killed!

“ Such is but one solitary instance. But there are many such scattered up and down in the ample records of nature, bearing silent but emphatic testimony to the kindness and beneficence of the Creator.

“ Not a tree,
A plant, a leaf, a blossom, but contains
A folio volume: we may read, and read,
And read again, but still find something new—
Something to please, and something to instruct,
E'en in the noisome weed.”

THE END.



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